Saipan youth joins EarthEcho International in DC. PAGE 2
CEDA announces $57M SSBCI 2.0 funding approval for CNMI. PAGE 4

Hafa Adai!

$1

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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Kilili decries passage of GOP voting bill

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

In this screen grab, Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) is shown during the floor debate for H.R. 8281 last July 10 at the U.S. House of Representatives.

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
EDITOR

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) voiced his displeasure to the U.S. House of Representatives' passage of H.R. 8281, the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act, last July 10. The bill passed with a vote of 221-198.

"U.S. citizens in the Marianas and other insular areas will find it harder to register to vote under terms of a Republican bill that passed the House last Wednesday. H.R. 8281, the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act, is supposed to prevent non-U.S. citizens from voting in federal elections. Instead, the bill puts new roadblocks in the way of citizens from the Marianas and other non-state U.S. areas," said Sablan in a social media post.

One of the roadblocks, Sablan said is that H.R. 8281 requires that only birth certificates issued by a U.S. state are acceptable proof of citizenship when registering to vote, whether at home

See KILILI on Page 4

AS OAG, KINGMAN DISQUALIFIED

Ex-governor Torres' case sees major shift

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

A significant twist in the ongoing legal saga against former governor Ralph DLG Torres occurred after judge pro tem Arthur Barcinas disqualified the CNMI Office of the Attorney General, including assistant attorney general James Robert Kingman, from prosecuting the case.

As Torres is facing charges of misconduct in office,

Kingman

among other allegations, the decision has caused a stir among local leaders and the community, as well as

See TORRES on Page 4

Tang claims Senate president's APGA statement patently false

By RACQUEL H. FLOYD
raxfloyd@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

NMI Settlement Fund Trustee Joyce C.H. Tang said Senate President Edith DeLeon Guerrero's (D-Saipan) statement at the Saipan Chamber of Commerce general membership meeting regarding the Alternative Payment of Greater Amount for the period of FY 2018-2020 is patently false.

Tang

In a letter sent to the Senate last July 16, 2024, Tang wrote, "APGA did not receive any payment for the period covering FY 2018-FY 2020. This is because the government's total revenue reported in its audited

See TANG on Page 4

Marianas faces possible heavy rains in coming days

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The National Weather Service based off of Tiyan, Guam says the Marianas can expect rainy weather in the next few days.

According to NWS' weekly regional report, potential for heavy rainfall for Guam and Saipan in the coming days should be expected as a monsoon trough and embedded disturbances shift northwest.

"A Hydrologic Outlook was issued this morning for Guam and the CNMI to provide details on the potential for heavy rainfall Thursday and Friday.

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INSIDE

LOCAL

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. has launched the 2024 Summer Youth Program through Public Health Services.

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NATION

President Joe Biden has given some clues as to what could make him step aside—especially as the calls from his own party to end his candidacy continue unabated.

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LIFE & STYLE

"The Bear" went on a tear at Wednesday morning's Emmy nominations with a comedy-series record 23, and "Shogun" led all nominees with 25 in a dominant year across categories for FX.

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Local

FOR CAPITOL HILL OCEAN WEEK

Saipan youth joins EarthEcho International in DC

Emma Chong, from Saipan, is one of eight youth leaders ages 17-22 selected by EarthEcho International to serve as a 2024 Ocean Protection Ambassador, receiving funds and training to design and execute community campaigns that advance ocean protections and achieve the goal of protecting 30% of America's waters by the year 2030 (30x30).

In celebration of National Ocean Month, Chong joined fellow Ocean Protection Ambassadors in Washington, D.C., to participate in Capitol Hill Ocean Week the nation's premier annual conference examining current marine, coastal and Great Lakes policy issues. During their time in D.C., Chong had the opportunity to highlight key marine conservation priorities from their local communities through presentations, directly engage in meetings with members of Congress and senior administration officials to call for ambitious action to advance ocean protection efforts, and build skills to support their own community campaigns by interacting with leading scientists, policymakers, scholars, businesses and conservation leaders.

"Through their engagement at CHOW, and leadership in their community, Emma joins a growing youth movement that is redefining ocean advocacy efforts with passion, vision and a focus on bold action," said Stacey Rafalowski, chief program officer, EarthEcho International." We look forward to supporting the work and contributions of the 2024 Ocean Protection Ambassadors as they advance creative campaigns to support community-led ocean protection efforts."

"The experience overall was rewarding, being exposed to the field of ocean conservation at a conference filled with like-minded people who not only shared my passion but could further my knowledge was almost life changing. Not only the events but the ability to make connections with

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YOUTH

From page 2

those who I met throughout my time in D.C., most especially my fellow Ocean Protection Ambassadors. I left D.C. with many memories I will continue to cherish for many days to come and career experience that will most definitely help me in the future. A big thank you to not only EarthEcho International but the staff that made the trip possible, I send my love and well wishes."

Chong is a current summer DCRM intern under the Shoreline Monitoring Program and will be attending NMC this fall as a Natural Resources Management Major with hopes to pursue Marine Science in the future.

As a 2024 Ocean Protection Ambassador, Chong receives campaign planning guidance and training from EarthEcho International and mentorship from local community partners to advance ocean protection efforts in their communities. The Ambassadors program is made possible with generous support from the National Ocean Protection Coalition, a project of Resources Legacy Fund.

For more information about the 2024 Ocean Protection Ambassadors, visit www.earthecho.org/ocean-protection-ambassadors and follow us on social media:

- Facebook: www.facebook.com/earthecho
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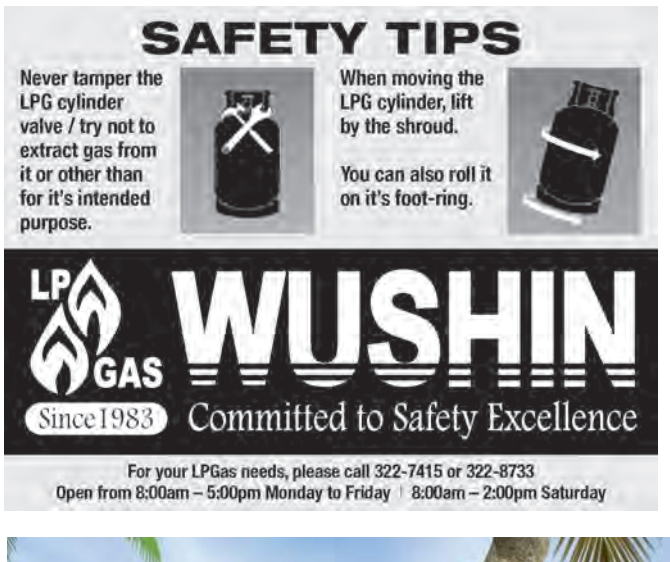
For information about EarthEcho International, please visit www.earthecho.org. ***(PR)***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CEDA announces $57M SSBCI 2.0 funding approval for CNMI

The Commonwealth Economic Development Authority is pleased to announce the approval of up to $57 million from the U.S. Treasury under the State Small Business Credit Initiative 2.0 for the CNMI. The funding will support loan guarantees, loan participation, and collateral support programs.

As a bank-driven program, CEDA will not be distributing direct loans but will collaborate with participating banks. While CEDA is in the process of contacting FDIC banks to gauge their interest in participating, their involvement is not yet confirmed. However, CEDA remains optimistic about their participation, given the success of the previous SSBCI 1.0 program.

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang assigned CEDA the responsibility of applying for and managing the SSBCI 2.0 program, a bank-driven initiative funded with a $57 million allocation for the CNMI, disbursed in three tranches. The first tranche will be nearly $19 million, and 80% of this must be disbursed before requesting the second tranche.

Initially, the CNMI Department of Commerce submitted the SSBCI 2.0 application under the previous administration (CY 2021-2022). However, complications from other U.S. Treasury ARPA funded programs (CY 2022-2023) led to a pause in the US Treasury review. Consequently, the Palacios-Apatang administration tasked CEDA to substantially modify and re-submit the application in the latter part of 2023. In early 2024, CEDA asserted to U.S. Treasury its financial and administrative autonomy and highlighted its strong audit track record with the implementation of the previously authorized SSBCI 1.0. After follow-up communication, and inclusion of additional layers of compliance and monitoring measures, the U.S. Treasury granted final approval yesterday, July 17, 2024. ***(PR)***

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

2nd round of fisheries assistance checks to arrive today

Financial relief assistance for the CNMI's fisheries community should be ready for pick up as early as July 19, Friday afternoon. According to the administrator of the Office of Grants Management & State Clearinghouse, Epiphanio E. Cabrera Jr., the financial awards for Round 2 arrived the morning of July 16, 2024 for the benefit of the Marianas' fishing community. The second round of the CNMI Fishermen Relief Program award was made possible through funding assistance received from Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (Section 12005) which provided assistance to tribal, subsistence, commercial, and charter fishery participants affected by the novel coronavirus.

Within the CNMI, there were a total 1,825 applicants to the fisheries program. Of the total, there is an aggregate of 1,782 awards to the CNMI dedicated to subsistence and commercial programs—broken down into 1,780 of 1,816 recipients for subsistence applications and 2 of 9 for commercial applicants. Over the past three months, the Pacific State Marine Fisheries Commission concluded the final review and released the awards determination only last week due to the high volume of applicants received from other states including Washington, Alaska, Oregon, California, and the other U.S. territories.

When questioned as to how much assistance each applicant received, Cabrera underscored that each subsistence applicant was to receive a one-time payment of $173.59, while commercial applicant awards were determined by tax figures provided by the businesses that reflected actual loss. Award disbursements were based on a formula created by the CNMI Division of Fish & Wildlife and approved by the Pacific State Marine Fisheries Commission. The CNMI received an appropriation of $411,002 for the program, of which $308,990.20 was distributed among subsistence fishermen and $89,365.00 to commercial applicants. All remaining funds were dedicated to mandated administrative fees on both state and commission levels. ***(PR)***

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

KILILI

From page 1

or elsewhere in the U.S.

"As a former executive director of the Commonwealth Election Commission, I understand the importance of protecting election integrity and how best to do it. I voiced my opposition to this poorly-drafted legislation during floor debate, but Republicans all voted in favor, sending the bill to the Senate."

On the floor debate Sablan alludes to, he clearly stated that H.R. 8281 would deny United States citizens in the CNMI—including him—their right to vote.

"This member standing here speaking in this hall will be denied the right the vote for this seat. And so, for that reason, I rise in opposition to the bill. To register to vote in H.R. 8281 requires documentary proof of citizenship issued by a state or a tribe, tribal government. But my constituents do not live in a state. My constituents live in the U.S. territory, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands," he said.

While individuals born in the Northern Mariana Islands are considered citizens of the United States, they may only vote in federal elections if they reside in one of the 50 states or Washington, D.C.

In any case, Sablan said they may even be denied that if the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act is passed by the Senate and signed into law by the U.S. President.

"So, if my constituents try to use a valid photo identification card issued by the Commonwealth, showing a place of birth as the Northern Marianas, they would be denied registration. If I were to produce the Department of State-issued passport given to members of Congress, it says my place of birth is the Northern Mariana Islands, I will be denied the right to vote."

Sablan further said during the floor debate, that this denial of the right to vote will not only be applicable to people of the CNMI, but also to U.S. citizens from other U.S. territories, including naturalized citizens.

"So, H.R. 8281, you know, unless this birth certificate was issued by the state, you can't vote. The same is true for U.S. citizens in Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The same is true for all naturalized U.S. citizens throughout the country. All will be denied the right to vote because H.R. 8281 does not recognize these territories as part of the United States and people born in these territories are United States citizens. I urge a no vote on this poorly drafted legislation. I don't understand something that only Americans can vote and only U.S. citizens who are not Americans cannot vote," he said.

Introduced by Rep. Roy, Chip (R-TX) in May 7, 2024, H.R. 8281 requires individuals to provide documentary proof of U.S. citizenship in order to register to vote in federal elections.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

TORRES

From page 1

former prosecution.

Barcinas issued the order last Tuesday, which granted the defense's motion for reconsideration and the motion to disqualify the OAG as prosecutors in the case.

As mentioned in the order, Barcinas also decided not to appoint a new special prosecutor, citing the inability to designate the Office of the Public Auditor for the role. Instead, the court deferred to the Executive Branch to "execute its prosecutorial authorities in the case."

In the same order, Barcinas disqualified the OAG and Kingman from prosecuting a related case involving refiled charges of contempt and misconduct in public office against Torres.

The decision has caused backlash from several lawmakers in the community, including Sen. Celina Babauta (D-Saipan). "I am deeply disappointed in the recent ruling from judge pro tempore Arthur Barcinas. His decision to disqualify the Attorney General's Office from prosecuting former governor Ralph Torres and to infringe upon the independent authority of our Attorney General to hire a special prosecutor is not only misguided but also undermines the very principles of justice and accountability," she stated. "The defense's motion for reconsideration of an issue settled literally years ago by previous pro tem judge Tolentino was due within 10 days and was instead late by hundreds of days. Judge Barcinas should never have ruled on the motion in the first place."

She added, "His ruling, punting to the Executive Branch to appoint a special prosecutor, is concerning. The separation of powers in our government is clear: the Attorney General's Office is entrusted with the responsibility to prosecute, independent of political influence."

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

TANG

From page 1

financials for these years did not meet the threshold to trigger APGA. It would be helpful to understand how APGA is calculated, and the math will confirm that APGA is not due for these periods."

Tang's letter is in response to DeLeon Guerrero's recent Chamber presentation wherein she said, "there's an overpayment of about $25.6 million from the fiscal year 2018 to the fiscal year 2020 that the CNMI government paid to the Settlement Fund, according to their payment of the alternative greater amount..."

Tang emphasized in the letter that the settlement agreement requires the government to make an additional payment to the Settlement Fund (the APGA), if a threshold annual revenue is met. This threshold is determined by calculating the difference of 17% of the government's total annual revenue (17% of Total Annual Revenue) and the Minimal Annual Payment (MAP) paid and referred to the 4.2 section of the Settlement Agreement attached to the letter-4.2 Alternative Payment of a Greater Amount if the CNMI Economy Improves. Before each fiscal year, the trustee, class counsel, and the CNMI shall review the audited financial statements for the most recent year available and determine the Total Annual Revenue received by the CNMI. If the trustee, class counsel, and the CNMI cannot agree on the amount of the Total Annual Revenue they shall submit their respective views to the District Court for resolution. If 17% of the Total Annual Revenue, as agreed by the trustee, class counsel, and the CNMI or as determined by the District Court is greater than the minimum annual amount paid by the CNMI under paragraphs 4.0-4.2, then the CNMI shall within 60 days, pay the difference to the Settlement Fund.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

RAINS

From page 1

This depends on how things evolve in western Micronesia the next couple of days. Expect the wetter pattern to persist into the weekend. Outdoor plans this weekend should keep weather conditions in mind, particularly with any necessary alternate venues in case heavier weather is present at the time of any certain event," said NWS.

Specifically, a complex weather pattern is in place across the western North Pacific this week as a monsoon trough stretches across Palau and western Micronesia with a tropical disturbance, Invest 91W, centered just west of Koror.

Near the Marianas, a TUTT stretches east to west from north of Wake Island to the northern Philippines, with an upper-level cell positioned northeast of Saipan. A surface trough, surging trades and an active ITCZ are all found east of the Marianas across the FSM/RMI.

The monsoon trough will lift northwest later this week keeping a wetter pattern in place for nearby islands, said NWS.

"Relatively fair weather is present across Guam and the CNMI, but showers and isolated thunderstorms are found nearby, associated with surface troughs just south of Guam and east of the Marianas. Expect scattered showers the next day or two with these troughs and the TUTT cell to the north. Regional moisture will increase for the last half of the week as the monsoon trough lifts northward," NWS said.

On the waters, NWS said to expect moderate to fresh winds and combined seas of 5 to 8 feet through the end of the week, particularly as a southwest swell builds in later this week.

"Keep up to date with regional weather forecasts in the coming days for short-term changes as regional weather patterns evolve. A monsoon trough will keep patchy showers, thunderstorms and variable winds in place across Yap and Palau the next few days. Winds will be light and variable within the trough axis, which is currently situated between Koror and Ngulu, with trades to the north and southwest winds to the south. The wet pattern will persist into the weekend with the trough gradually lifting northwest. Winds could be gusty at times, particularly near heavier showers. The tropical disturbance, Invest 91W, while near Palau to the west, will not be a direct threat to Yap or Palau as it tracks generally west-northwest. Farther east, across Chuuk, Pohnpei, Kosrae, and Majuro, an active ITCZ and a trade-wind surge are producing showers and thunderstorms across Pohnpei, Kosrae, and Majuro. Gusty showers and choppy seas are expected across the region through Wednesday night, with combined seas reaching up to 10 feet near Majuro," NWS reports.

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BEAD Vol. 2 approval brings NMI closer to expanded broadband access for all

The CNMI Broadband Policy and Development Office is excited to announce the approval of Vol. 2 of its Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Initial Proposal by the assistant secretary for the National Telecommunications and Information Administration. This approval, along with the endorsement of Vol. 1, marks a pivotal step toward providing broadband for all in the CNMI and opening doors to a wealth of digital opportunities for all CNMI residents.

Glen Hunter, special assistant for the CNMI Broadband Policy and Development Office, conveyed gratitude for the approval, stating, "We are heartened by the recognition of our continuous efforts to enhance broadband services in the CNMI. This approval underscores our unwavering dedication and commitment to enhancing broadband services."

Hunter extended sincere appreciation to all stakeholders in the CNMI, territorial and state broadband offices, the NTIA, and other federal partners for their invaluable contributions to this meticulous planning process. He also acknowledged Gov. Arnold I. Palacios for his leadership and emphasis on this critical initiative. "The governor's vision and this collaborative endeavor highlight the commitment of all involved in bridging the digital gap and ensuring fair access to high-speed internet across the Commonwealth," he added.

Palacios commended BPD for their dedication and steadfast commitment to advancing technological infrastructure in the Commonwealth. "This approval marks a significant milestone and achievement for the BPD Office and the CNMI. We are one step closer to providing broadband for all in the CNMI," Palacios emphasized. He underscored the importance of such initiatives in fostering economic growth, improving connectivity, and creating opportunities for education and business development for all residents.

A year ago, the governor secured $81 million in federal funding from the NTIA for the BEAD program. With this latest NTIA approval, the CNMI now joins 17 other states in this notable planning achievement. The governor reiterated his gratitude and commitment, stating, "The approval of the Initial Proposal Vol. 2 reflects our resourcefulness, dedication, and hard work in meeting and surpassing deadlines and expectations."

The BEAD program aims to allocate funding for broadband infrastructure and digital equity activities. This initiative holds promise for the CNMI, addressing historical challenges that hindered broadband accessibility. By tackling these barriers, BPD strives to enhance internet connectivity, ensuring residents can access improved educational resources, telehealth services, and economic opportunities.

For more information or media inquiries, contact BPD at cnmi.bpd@gmail.com. Visit us online at bpd.cnmi.gov for updates and further details.

BEAD update

Vol. 2 was submitted by BPD on Dec. 19, 2023, following a 30-day public review process. Post-submission, it underwent thorough evaluation by the NTIA before receiving official approval on July 12, 2024. The CNMI now joins 17 states that have also received approval for Vol. 2 (BEAD Initial Proposal Progress Dashboard).

BPD recently concluded the BEAD Challenge Process on June 30, 2024, and is collaborating with NTIA to finalize the status list for all Broadband Serviceable Locations and Community Anchor Institutions. To streamline the process, BPD aligned the challenge process with the Volume Two NTIA review.

Looking ahead, BPD will focus on the next phase of the CNMI BEAD Program

See BEAD on Page 7

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

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THE POSITION: CARPENTER

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TELEPHONE NUMBER: 1(670) 235-8778

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

NAME OF EMPLOYER: South Pacific Galaxy Corporation

THE POSITION: Accountant

NO. OF VACANCY: 1

JOB SITE: Chalan Pale Arnold Road, Chalan Laulau, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

JOB DESCRIPTION: Review, formulate, recommend, and implement accounting policies, systems, and procedures of the company Provides and interprets fundamental financial data and information to management; Maintain accuracy of general revenue, expenditure ledgers, and subsidiary financial systems; Reconcile financial ledgers and records; Prepare the following financial statements and reports following generally accepted accounting principles and statutory basis: (a) Balance Sheet; (b) Statement of Income and Surplus; (c) Statement of cash flows; and (d) Annual Statements; Prepare general and subsidiary ledgers and supporting schedules; Verify all journals, checks, and account payable vouchers and checks propriety of entries and adequacy of supporting documents; Supervise and coordinate with bookkeeper and accounting/auditing clerk to ensure that postings to the books of accounts are accurate and that the subsidiary ledgers are up to date and periodically reconcile with the general ledger; Research and resolve discrepancies; Review aging of account payables and receivables; Review and audit all account payables, purchase orders, cash receipts, payrolls, utility billings, and other accounting records and transactions; Ensure money is posted to correct accounts and that all account balance; Provide assistance in the development of budgets for various projects and create a variety of spreadsheets, documents, and graphs for that purpose, if necessary; Perform treasury functions, such as matching and timing of fund sources with disbursements and the implementation of budget; Prepare bank reconciliations and related journal entries for a variety of accounts, including, but not limited to, debt and loan servicing; Prepare a variety of monthly, periodic, and annual financial and statistical reports and account summaries; Prepare year-end closings and accompanying financial reports; Maintain records for audit purposes; Maintain and track fixed assets inventory control records for the company; Participate in year-end audits; Compile and prepare supporting schedules, work papers, and financial reports as requested by auditors; Provide responsible assistance to management staff; Provide and interpret fundamental financial data and information to management; Analyze financial transactions and formulas; Interpret and apply applicable federal, state, and local laws, codes, and regulations; Maintain efficient and effective financial systems and procedures; Examine and verify financial documents and reports; and Perform other related duties as may be assigned.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:
EDUCATIONE: Must be at least a High School Graduate.
WORK EXPERIENCE: Must have at least 60 months of relevant work experience in accounting-related works, such as accountant, or accounting and/or auditing clerk, or Bookkeeper

HOW TO APPLY: Submit or mail comprehensive Resume and supporting credentials to:

HAK CHON BAE
President
SOUTH PACIFIC GALAXY CORPORATION
Office Address: Chalan Pale Arnold Road, Chalan Laulau,
Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 501030, Saipan, MP 96950
Email Address: spg.corp@yahoo.com
Telephone Number: Tel. (670) 235-1234

Office of the Public Auditor

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Website: http://opacnmi.com
1220 Route 312, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Opening Date: 7/12/2024 Closing Date: 7/26/2024

POSITION	EXAMINATION NO.
(1) Audit Manager	OPA-24-002

The Application for Employment may be available for download at www.opacnmi.com and available for pick at the Office of the Public Auditor, Building 1220, Route 312, Capitol Hill.

UNITED STATES
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

NOTICE OF COUNCIL MEETING

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 12, the CNMI Council on Developmental Disabilities hereby gives notice that it will hold its 2nd Quarter General Membership Meeting on July 31, 2024 from 9:00am to 1:00pm at the Saipan World Resort, Sunflower Room

AGENDA

I. Call to Order
II. Roll Call
III. Review & Adoption of the Agenda of July 31, 2024
IV. Review & Adoption of Meeting Minutes of April 18, 2024
V. Old Business
a. Self-Care Awareness & Techniques Training for CLI Self Advocates Update
b. Fundamentals of Caregiving Training Update
c. Emergency Management & Disability Awareness Training Update
d. IntellectAbility – Reducing Risk Training for Clinicians Update
e. Mental Health Awareness Month Update
f. Disability Policy Seminar Update
VI. New Business
a. DIF Grant
b. UCEDD Summit
c. 2024 Disability Sport Festival – Saipan
VII. Reports
a. Chairperson
b. State Plan Committee Chairperson
c. Fiscal Committee Chairperson
d. Executive Director
VIII. Action Items
a. Review and Approve the CDD State Plan Updates: FY 2025 & FY 2026 Work Plans
b. Review and Approve the Proposed FY 2025 DD Basic Grant Budget
c. Ratify the Approval of the CNMI ATP's FY 2024 Final Grant Award Budget
d. Ratify the Approval of CDD's FY 2024 Final Grant Award Budget
e. Election of Officers
i. Secretary
ii. Vice Chairperson
iii. Chairperson
IX. Miscellaneous
X. Next Meeting
XI. Adjournment

Note: Pursuant to P.L. 8-41, Section 13(a) 7, the Council may vote to meet in Executive Session.
In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), individuals who wish to attend this meeting and require special accommodations are requested to call the Council 5 days in advance at 664-7000. The Public is welcome to submit written or 3 minutes of oral comments regarding the agenda above.

/s/ Concepcion Ulloa
Chairperson

This ad is supported by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award total $273,990 with 100 percent funding by ACL/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACL/HHS, or the U.S. Government.

26 SIS students earn 42 AP distinctions

Saipan International School proudly announces that 26 of its students have earned a remarkable 42 Advanced Placement (AP) distinctions this year. Additionally, three-fourths of SIS students taking AP exams this year achieved scores of 3 or higher. Leading the way in each of the grade levels authorized to take AP courses were senior Tony Li with an average score of 4.43, Christian Newman (Grade 11) with an average score of 3.67, and Dong Huyn Lee (Grade 10) with an average score of 4.4.

These results underscore SIS' commitment to academic excellence and its role as a leader in advanced education on the island. "This year set a record number of AP Scholars at SIS," said Dr. Ron Snyder, Saipan International School headmaster. "Our offerings have increased to a total of 15 AP courses and this breadth of possibilities has helped our students achieve these distinctions. But it is the students who have met the stringent requirements set by College Board and we are very proud of them and their achievements."

SIS is also celebrating its recognition as the first AP Capstone Diploma school on the island, a prestigious honor that reflects the school's dedication to providing rigorous academic programs. This year, 22 SIS students successfully passed the AP Research course, further highlighting the students' hard work and the school's supportive learning environment. The AP Capstone program is an innovative diploma program created by the College Board that emphasizes research, collaboration, and communication skills. It consists of two courses: AP Seminar and AP Research.

1. AP Seminar: In this course, students explore various academic and real-world issues through an interdisciplinary lens. They learn to analyze information from multiple sources, develop arguments, and present their findings. The course assessment includes a team project, an individual research-based essay and presentation, and an end-of-course exam.

2. AP Research: Building on the skills developed in AP Seminar, students in AP Research design, plan, and conduct a year-long research project on a topic of their choice. They produce a 4,000-5,000 word academic paper and present and defend their research findings to a panel. There is no exam for AP Research; the assessment is based on the paper and presentation.

The following students have earned distinctions in various AP categories:

AP Scholar Awarded to students who score 3 or higher on three or more AP exams.

- Serin Chung, 12th Grade
- Martha M. Culp, 11th Grade
- Jiho Kong, 10th Grade
- Seohee Lee, 12th Grade
- Charlie Wei Li, 11th Grade
- John A. Linden, 12th Grade
- Claire S. Park, 12th Grade
- Yelin Park, 12th Grade
- Yebin Shin, 12th Grade
- Charlene T. Son, 11th Grade
- Hangyeol Son, 11th Grade
- Ian J. Song, 11th Grade
- Elizabeth N. Tom, 11th Grade
- Jinhee Woo, 11th Grade

AP Scholar with Honor Awarded to students who score an average of at least 3.25 on all AP exams taken and scores of 3 or higher on four or more of these exams.

- Stephanie Kim, 12th Grade
- Kyle M. Kramer, 11th Grade
- Li Sha Lai, 12th Grade
- Dong Gyu Lee, 10th Grade

AP Scholar with Distinction Awarded to students who score an average of at least 3.5 on all AP exams taken and scores of 3 or higher on five or more of these exams.

- Dong Hyun Lee, 10th Grade
- Tony Li, 12th Grade
- Milarose Jeanne M. Magno, 11th Grade
- Christian F. Newman, 11th Grade
- Angel M. Yu, 12th Grade

AP Capstone Diploma Awarded to students who earn scores of 3 or higher in AP Seminar and AP Research and on four additional AP exams.

- Serin Chung, 12th Grade
- Stephanie Kim, 12th Grade
- Li Sha Lai, 12th Grade
- Milarose Jeanne M. Magno, 11th Grade
- Christian F. Newman, 11th Grade
- Claire S. Park, 12th Grade
- Yebin Shin, 12th Grade

AP Seminar and Research Certificate Awarded to students who earn scores of 3 or higher in both AP Seminar and AP Research. The 11th grade students still have the chance to earn the AP Capstone Diploma by completing all of the requirements in their 12th Grade year.

- Martha M. Culp, 11th Grade
- Junghyun Hwang, 12th Grade
- Kyle M. Kramer, 11th Grade
- Yelin Park, 12th Grade
- Soledad T. Sablan, 11th Grade
- Charlene T. Son, 11th Grade
- Hangyeol Son, 11th Grade
- Ian J. Song, 11th Grade
- Elizabeth N. Tom, 11th Grade
- Jinhee Woo, 11th Grade
- Jacky Zhen, 11th Grade

AP International Diploma The AP International Diploma (APID) is a globally recognized certificate awarded and is designed for students who wish to pursue university studies outside their home country or those who want to demonstrate a strong international academic background.

To earn the APID, students must fulfill the following requirements:

1. Global Perspective: Score a 3 or higher on two AP exams from two different world languages or one AP world language exam and one AP English exam.

2. Science or Math: Score a 3 or higher on one AP exam in either science or mathematics.

3. Global Studies: Score a 3 or higher on one AP exam from the history and social sciences category, in courses that demonstrate a global perspective. At SIS this includes AP Human Geography and AP Macroeconomics.

4. Additional Exams: Score a 3 or higher on one or two additional AP exams, not already used to meet the criteria above, for a total of five AP exams.

The APID was awarded to:

- Serin Chung, 12th Grade

For more information about Saipan International School and its programs, please visit the school website at: https://www.saipaninternationalschool.com/ or contact the office at (670) 288-9660. Enrollment is open.

About Saipan International

School Saipan International School is a premier educational institution committed to providing a rigorous academic curriculum that prepares students for success in higher education and beyond. With a focus on excellence, innovation, and global citizenship, SIS nurtures students to become leaders in their communities and the world. ***(PR)***

BEAD

From page 6

by developing and implementing a sub-grant process as outlined in Vol. 2. This process is set to commence shortly after NTIA approves the Challenge Process results. A copy of the CNMI BEAD Initial Proposal (Vol. 1 and 2) will be published on the BPD website (bpd.cnmi.gov) in the coming days. ***(PR)***

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.
PO BOX 501055•SAIPAN•MP•96950
PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500/1 • FAX: (1-670) 234-5962
WEBSITE: WWW.CNMIPORTS.COM

DESIGN/BUILD FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A VEHICULAR RAMP ROTA WEST HARBOR COMMERCIAL MARINA, ROTA, CNMI

PROJECT NO. CPA-RFP-009-24

Notice is hereby given that the Commonwealth Ports Authority (the "CPA") is accepting sealed proposals, subject to the terms and conditions of this Request for Proposals (the "RFP") and other contract provisions, for awarding a Design/Build Vehicular Ramp construction project at the Rota West Harbor Commercial Marina, Rota, CNMI. The Design/Build RFP Package and other considerations will be available for pick up beginning ***June 21, 2024,*** upon payment of $200.00 in cash, cashier's check or certified check to the CPA Accounting Office, 2nd Floor, Departure Terminal Building, Saipan International Airport.

Proposals will be received at the Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Ports Authority, 2nd Floor-Arrival Building, Saipan International Airport no later than ***2:00 P.M. CHST, July 24, 2024.*** Proposals received after the date/time indicated above will not be opened and will be returned to the Proposer.

Each proposal shall be accompanied by a bid bond, a certified check, or a cashier's check in the amount no less than ***ten percent (10%) of the total proposal amount.*** Checks shall be made payable to the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

CPA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted for: (a) any of the reasons set forth in this Request for Proposals; or (b) any of the reasons set forth in the CPA Procurement Rules and Regulations regarding bid rejection or cancellation; or (c) sufficient justification exists that awarding the project contract would not be in the best interest of CPA. CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said proposals if in its sole opinion to do so would be in CPA's best interest. All proposals shall become property of the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

_____ Date: _____
FREDERICK PANGELINAN
Acting Executive Director

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2nd Floor Arrival Bldg.
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950 |
Phone: (670) 237-6500/1 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
Website: www.cnmiports.com

INVITATION FOR BID
PROJECT NO. CPA-IFB-014-24

SUBMISSION DATE: JULY 30, 2024: 2:00 P.M.

"REPAIRS OF TYPHOON MAWAR DAMAGES AT THE BTM ROTA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT"

THE BID PACKAGE IS AVAILABLE FOR PICK UP AT THE COMMONWONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY (CPA) ACCOUNTING OFFICE, 2ND FLOOR, DEPARTURE BUILDING, SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT BEGINNING JUNE 28, 2024. AN ADMINISTRATIVE FEE OF $50.00 SHALL BE PAID TO CPA BEFORE A BIDDER MAY OBTAIN THE BID PACKAGE. PAYMENTS SHALL BE IN CASH, CASHIER'S CHECK, OR CREDIT CARD.

BIDDERS ARE TO SUBMIT ONE (1) ORIGINAL AND TWO (2) COPIES IN A SEALED ENVELOPE AND MARKED "REPAIRS OF TYPHOON DAMAGES AT THE BTM ROTA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (IFB-014-24)" TO THE OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, 2ND FLOOR, ARRIVAL BUILDING, SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ON OR BEFORE 2:00 P.M., JULY 30, 2024. BIDDERS SHALL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATIONS ALL CHARGES ASSOCIATED WITH THIS PROCUREMENT BEFORE FINALIZING ITS BID PRICE.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CPA PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION §40-50-1020 AND 1025 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CPA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF CPA.

LEO B. TUDELA DATE: _____
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.
PO BOX 501055•SAIPAN•MP•96950
PHONE: (1-670) 234-6500/1 • FAX: (1-670) 234-5962
WEBSITE: WWW.CNMIPORTS.COM

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

AIRLINE STAIRS & AMBULIFT MAINTENANCE SERVICE AND REPAIRSFRANCISCO C. ADA/SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

PROJECT NO. CPA-RFP-010-24

Notice is hereby given that the Commonwealth Ports Authority ("the CPA") is accepting sealed proposals, subject to the terms and conditions of this Request for Proposal ("the RFP") and other contract provisions, for awarding a contract to provide maintenance, service, and repairs to its airline stairs and ambulift truck at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. The Executive Director hereby determines that the use of an Invitation for Bid is neither practical nor advantageous to the CPA because the CPA wishes to acquire services and/or products that cannot be evaluate by price alone (NMIAC § 40-50-225 (a)).

The Proposal Package is available for pick-up beginning July 12, 2024, upon payment of $100.00 in cash, cashier's check, or credit card to the CPA Accounting Office, 2nd Floor, Departure Terminal Building, Saipan International Airport.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted for; (a) any of the reasons set forth in this RFP; (b) any of the reasons set forth in the CPA Procurement Rules and Regulations regarding bid/proposal rejection or cancellation; or (c) sufficient justification exists that awarding the proposal would not be in the best interest of CPA. The CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said proposals if in its sole opinion to do so would not be in CPA's best interest.

All proposals shall become the property of the Commonwealth Ports Authority. This RFP shall be executed as per the CPA Procurement Regulations.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

_____ July 12, 2024
LEO B. TUDELA Date
Executive Director

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2nd Floor Arrival Bldg.
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950 |
Phone: (670) 237-6500/1 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
Website: www.cnmiports.com

INVITATION FOR BID
PROJECT NO. CPA-IFB-007-24-(REPACKAGED)

SUBMISSION DATE: AUGUST 07, 2024 (2:00 PM)

"PROVIDE & INSTALL SIX (6) BRAND NEW COMMERCIAL AIR-CONDITIONING UNITS AT THE FRANCISCO M. BORJA/TINIAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

THE BID PACKAGE IS AVAILABLE FOR PICK UP AT THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY (CPA) ACCOUNTING OFFICE, 2ND FLOOR, DEPARTURE BUILDING, FRANCISCO C. ADA/SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT BEGINNING JULY 08, 2024. AN ADMINISTRATIVE FEE OF $100.00 SHALL BE PAID TO CPA BEFORE A BIDDER MAY OBTAIN THE BID PACKAGE. PAYMENTS SHALL BE IN CASH, CASHIER'S CHECK, OR CREDIT CARD.

BIDDERS ARE TO SUBMIT ONE (1) ORIGINAL AND TWO (2) COPIES OF THEIR BID IN A SEALED ENVELOPE AND MARKED "PROVIDE & INSTALL SIX (6) BRAND NEW COMMERCIAL AIR-CONDITIONING UNITS, **(IFB-007-24-REPACKAGED)**" TO THE OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, 2ND FLOOR, ARRIVAL BUILDING, SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ON OR BEFORE 2:00 P.M., AUGUST 07, 2024. BIDDERS SHALL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATIONS ALL CHARGES ASSOCIATED WITH THIS PROCUREMENT BEFORE FINALIZING ITS BID PRICE.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CPA PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION §40-50-1020 AND 1025 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CPA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF CPA.

LEO B. TUDELA DATE: _____
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Hiding medical debt won't make it go away

Paying for healthcare in America is a complicated business. In recent years, the government has taken valuable steps to reduce the harm that unexpected medical bills and unscrupulous debt collectors inflict on consumers. But a newly proposed rule, which would strip all healthcare bills from credit reports, is a step backward.

Research by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has shown that medical debts aren't reliable indicators of a borrower's creditworthiness. Still, in 2022 the agency estimated that medical bills amounted to $88 billion of the debt on credit reports. That same year, the three biggest credit-reporting companies and two main credit-scoring companies voluntarily reduced their use of healthcare debt.

That made a real difference. Within 15 months, the share of consumers with a credit record that included a medical collection fell to 5% from 14%. The remaining 15 million Americans, with a total of $49 billion in outstanding healthcare bills on credit reports, were disproportionately in low-income areas.

The CFPB's new proposal would ban lenders from using information about medical debt to inform their credit decisions and prohibit credit-reporting companies from providing such data to lenders. By wiping away any record of these debts, the CFPB estimates that credit scores for those affected would rise by an average of 20 points, enabling lenders to approve about 22,000 additional mortgages every year.

Is that really a good thing? Should thousands of people take out home loans each year without giving their lenders a full picture of their financial condition? Transparency is typically the friend of financial regulators, so it's odd to see a federal agency proposing less of it.

It's true that too many medical debts on credit reports are placed there by collection agencies trying to extract money from the wrong people or for bills that were already paid. But in those cases, the CFPB should use its enforcement powers to punish bad actors, as they've already done in a couple of recent cases.

More to the point, a significant portion of that $49 billion in debt undoubtedly reflects legitimate unpaid bills from doctors, hospitals, clinics or other healthcare businesses. Stripping those from patients' credit reports and scores risks taking away an incentive for them to pay what they owe, or to even sign up for insurance plans.

If healthcare providers can't count on getting paid for their services—a process already complicated by the U.S.'s tangled insurance industry—they could opt to raise prices or enact more administrative barriers to receiving care. That's only going to make the accessibility problem worse.

Incurring medical expenses and debt always feels unfair; no one chooses to become sick or injured. But removing any record of these costs doesn't solve the underlying problem: Too many Americans lack adequate health insurance. In fact, the lack of disclosure could make lenders warier of some of the very borrowers the CFPB is trying to help.

Fixing the costly American healthcare system should of course be an urgent priority. But it isn't the job of the CFPB. The agency should focus on doing the important work of protecting consumers, not on rewriting their credit histories.

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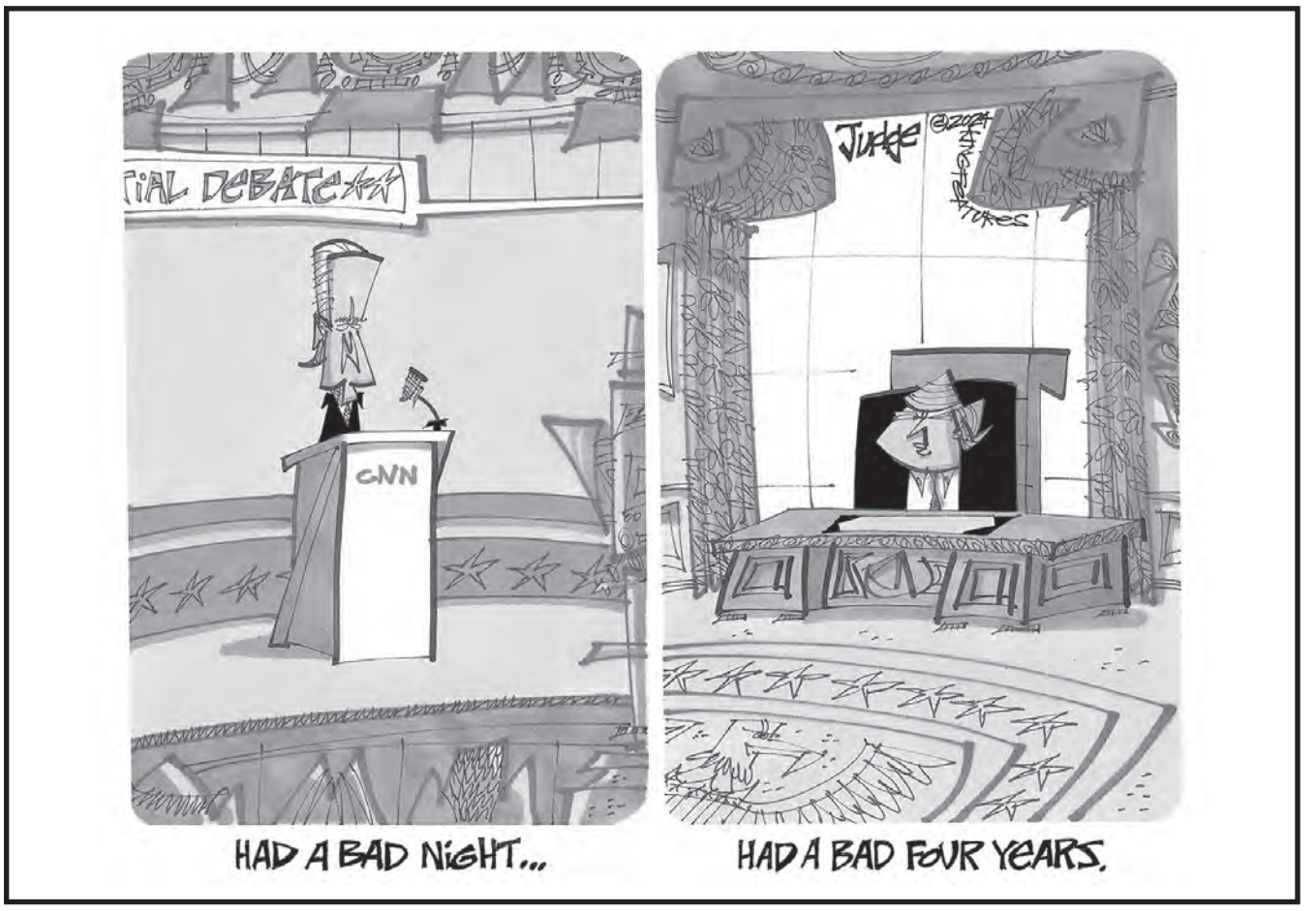


Is there no one else!?

By JIM RAYPHAND
Special to the Saipan Tribune

It is something of a mind-boggle to come so far and yet still be so far away. Such is the case with my conditional plan to run for Congress, if I can lose a certain amount of bodyweight in a specific amount of time. My close friends have taken to asking for updates.

"Inquiring minds want to know," they say. Well, I have made significant progress. More precisely, as of this writing, I've managed to drop 30 lbs. (I've come so far) and yet I am still so fat—a bit discouraging and a long way to go, but no small feat, if I do say so myself. A younger, more reckless version of me would already be celebrating with beers in the cooler and salted turkey-tails on the grill, but the truth is I'm really enjoying the prospect of being healthier and of holding down the Office of the People of the Northern Mariana Islands.

For those in the running, that's me nipping at your heels.

And speaking of heels, in a now famous scene from the movie, *Troy*, the central character, Achilles, boldly stares down a field army (or maybe it's a corps) of 12th century enemy soldiers challenging them all to a fight after he makes short work of their most fierce challenger.

"Is there no one else!!?" he proclaims. "Is there no one else!?"

Spoiler alert: Of the thousands of rough-neck soldiers assembled for war in that moment, none would step up to the challenge opting instead to tuck tail in shock and awe as Achilles struts off into the stuff of legends. Although Achilles proved himself to be a great warrior with superhuman abilities, his deep-seeded character flaws (vanity and anger among them) detract from or bring into question his capacity to act with nobility and integrity. We know, of course, that he would later be taken down by way of a weak spot on his heel. By definition, he was a tragic hero.

I suppose it is a bit of a stretch to draw parallels between Greek mythology and contemporary, much less local politics (or maybe not), but I can't help thinking how some of the central figures in this year's upcoming election while depicting certain heroic traits, like courage and compassion, fail to successfully confront glaring conflicts due to character flaws and poor judgment, or a combination of both. I propose too that the Trojan Horse may be a metaphor for politicians at our doorsteps (not all politicians of course, but certainly those whose public façade stands in contrast to their personal compulsions).

I am no Achilles and certainly no hero (although a tragic figure in many ways), but it may well be a compromised heel (the pain therein due to plantar fasciitis) and an injured knee that thwarts my "run" at the delegate seat. If I'm being honest, while I was purposefully and boldly proclaiming what I would do (as a way to manifest a better version of myself), even I doubted I could make this much progress so quickly toward a healthier mind, body and soul, but here I am… better than I was yesterday and a hell of a lot better than I was five weeks ago.

As a kind of reality check, I am having to consider that one of the greatest honors of my professional career has been the very unexpected gubernatorial appointment to head the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation otherwise known as OVR approximately one year and half ago—with presumably another two and a half more years to go. To my knowledge, I remain in good standing with the governor and lieutenant governor, so it bothers me to think that they might perceive my aspirations to run elsewhere as a lack of commitment to the job or worse an insult—I can only hope that isn't the case. The truth is we have assembled a solid team of both veteran employees and newcomers at OVR and I feel confident that this administration will in time be leaving the office in good hands, but more importantly as good, if not better, than we found it. Of course, there is still much to do here and we are working feverishly to make sustainable improvements during this and any new administration to come. In any event, I realize the need to have this conversation with them before I could actually segue into politics. I'm not too sure, but I suspect that isn't a really good start to convincing either of them to change their minds and vote for me in the coming election.

For that matter, this late in the game, I'm not sure I can convince anybody to vote for me. My own 12-year-old son told me he is "voting for Mr. Probst" because he was teammates with the son in soccer. Coincidentally, John Gonzales' sons made an impressive, lasting impression on my sister who taught one or more of them in high school—she speaks highly of them. As a father myself, why wouldn't I vote for other committed fathers based on impressions given by their children? I don't know the two ladies in the running very well except through mutual acquaintances—friend of a friend of friends or family of friends. More specifically, I consider one of Kim's brothers a friend with whom I enjoy and share common interests. And, one of my closest (now deceased) friends who was more like a brother told me Liana was his cousin. Again, why wouldn't I vote for them on the basis of mutual family and friendships alone?

The thing is voting for each of us is a personal choice, so you

See IS THERE on Page 9

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

More than a Marianas

By STEPHANIE DIAZ
Special to the Saipan Tribune

In the Pacific Ocean, lies a group of neighboring islands called the Marianas. Among the 14 islands, one of them is my home: the beautiful island of Tinian. The home of luscious beaches, where your toes dig into the sand, your ears are treated to the wonderful sounds of waves crashing, and your soul is immersed in the scorching, humid air. As I step onto the soft sands of Tachogña Beach, I hear the ocean air whisper the stories of many generations before.

There, I see my Chamorro heritage which I ground myself in. I see the gift of traditions and values woven into the very foundation of who I am. And, I see this lovely picture where the beach has turned into my home away from home. Every day, I find myself reinforcing my Chamorro heritage by using the knowledge carried down through generations. Much like the sweet nectar of the island's flowers, I absorb the essence of my Chamorro culture and seek ways to gain more knowledge of my heritage. For instance, one practice that plays an important role in my Chamorro identity is the principle of *inafa'maolek*, or reciprocity. From the small homes to the large gatherings, the spirit of helping and giving back flows like an ancient stream. To me, it's more than a gesture; it's a way of existence, shaping not just my heritage but also the vibrant community on Tinian, where a timeless community blooms.

Here on my island home, neighbors are more than just passing acquaintances; they are family, bonded through island living. In the peaceful afternoons, we drive down narrow roads in our cars, exchanging waves similar to those seen on a Saturday afternoon. We admire the flavor of home-cooked meals flowing through open windows, calling us to enjoy the benefit of family kitchens nearby. During the fiestas, many traditional dishes are displayed, which brings neighbors and friends together to celebrate. And, in the corner of little grocery stores, advice, laughter, and news are shared amongst the people, strengthening the bonds in the community.

Writing this fills me with an eternal appreciation for being able to grow up on the islands, where community relationships are built into the foundation of daily life. The Marianas represent the sense of relationships more than anywhere else, where traditions run deep into every family, connecting us to our roots and one another.

Within this community, ingrained in my culture are the values of helping and giving back.

In my family, whether it's lending a hand to decorate at an event or borrowing items one might need, these actions aren't just simple gestures but deep connections within our family. They're ways of saying, "I got you, and I am here for you." In those moments, we're not just relatives; we're a tightly-knit clan, bound by shared experiences and unwavering support. The sense of unity from islands across the seas is uplifting, and I saw this firsthand as my family navigated through the difficulties of our baby angel battling brain cancer. What we thought was just a passing flu or sickness quickly turned into a chronic struggle that changed our perception of time and the precious moments we shared. In just a year, our lives were forever changed.

During this difficult time, the spirit of *inafa'maolek* came through. Our family and community united around us, showing firm love and support. As we gathered around the dining table, the mood was full of sorrow and hope. Each meal symbolized not only nutrition but also our community's strength and perseverance. The clinking of silverware blended with meaningful chats and occasional giggles, creating a balance of support that rang through our home's walls. Amidst fear and anxiety, we found solace in the embrace of our family and neighbors. I still remember the times that had a lot of impacts, such as meaningful messages and visits from family near and far, meals made by aunties that nourished our minds and hearts, and prayers and well-wishes wrapped around us like a warm blanket. In these acts of goodwill, we sensed the genuine spirit of inafa'maolek, as each act of giving sent rays of perseverance through our hearts.

My niece's journey demonstrated the strength of love and unity, bringing our family closer together. The struggles I encountered with my family have left a lasting impression, like footprints printed on the sand. Those struggles taught me the importance of keeping our beloved traditions and practices, as they serve as the ties that connect us all as one whole. Every part of our cultural history still influences my values and actions to this day. It reminds me that our customs are more than simply historical treasures; they are ongoing legacies that help us navigate through modern life with resilience, unity, and unwavering strength. Even with everything changing so fast around us, the heart and spirit of *inafa'maolek* remain steadfast because of how it is preserved.

Our culture centers around narratives, which connect us throughout history. I think about my grandkids, and their children's children, who will grow up to tell stories about how *inafa'maolek* has been our family's guideline. I distinctly remember sitting on the edge of my grandma's bed, with the glow of the T.V. casting a shadow over her face, watching her paint pictures with words from past generations and their beliefs. Her tales taught lessons about goodwill, resiliency, and what it means to be a Chamorro. As a kid, I didn't take much thought into it, but now I think about the legacy I wish to leave. A legacy of carrying on the gift of our cultural heritage, wrapped in the warmth of storytelling.

I will correct myself in saying that the Marianas are neighboring islands in the vast Pacific Ocean because it's more than that. It's an expansive ocean packed with familia. We are descendants of the Chamorro and Carolinian ancestors who navigated the waters and lands long ago, and their wisdom flows through our veins like the currents that caress our shores. When I say it is, "More than a Marianas." I'm not referring to the geography of the islands but the connection to our heritage, our community, and the stories that keep us together, binding us as one familia, now and for the generations to come.

This essay written by Stephanie Diaz won third place in the NMI Humanities Council's recent Marianas Writing Contest.

Overcoming AI voice cloning attacks on election integrity

By DAVID LEVINE
The Fulcrum

David Levine is an election integrity and management consultant who works to ensure that eligible voters can vote, free and fair elections are perceived as legitimate, and election processes are properly administered and secured.

Imagine it's Election Day. You're getting ready to go vote when you receive a call from a public official telling you to vote at an early voting location rather than your Election Day polling site. So, you go there only to discover it's closed. Turns out that the call wasn't from the public official but from a replica created by voice cloning technology.

That might sound like something out of a sci-fi movie, but many New Hampshire voters experienced something like it two days before the 2024 presidential primary. They received robocalls featuring a deepfake simulating the voice of President Joe Biden that discouraged them from participating in the primary.

To be sure, there's no indication that the fake Biden robocalls had a discernible impact on the New Hampshire primary, but the incident is a stark reminder of the growing threat posed by tactics like this, which are increasingly being used by malign actors to target elections not only in the U.S. but in Slovakia, Argentina and elsewhere.

As artificial intelligence tools become more accessible and affordable, deepfake attacks (of which voice cloning is only one example) are becoming more frequent. How can voters protect themselves from similar efforts to ensure that they make informed decisions for the November general election? Here are a few tips:

1. Avoid answering calls from unknown numbers: Picking up a call from an unknown number increases the likelihood of falling for a scam. Additionally, if you answer a call from an unknown number and speak, a scammer can record your voice and use it to create cloned scam calls to trick your family members and friends.

2. Verify the caller's identity: If you do answer a call that raises suspicion, take steps to verify the caller's identity. Several New Hampshire voters did this after receiving the Biden robocall and were able to confirm that the voice was fake. Try to contact the person (or their campaign) through an alternative channel to confirm that the call was actually from the person/organization it purported to be from.

3. Report potential voice cloning: If you may have received an AI voice scam call, contact the appropriate authorities so they can use their expertise to investigate further. This can help address your scam, as well as others, and deter similar future behavior. After New Hampshire voters alerted law enforcement and their attorney general about the robocall that used AI to impersonate Biden, the alleged culprit was identified and charged with 13 counts of voter suppression, a felony, and 13 counts of impersonating a candidate, a misdemeanor. He also faces a proposed $6 million fine from the Federal Communications Commission.

4. Educate yourself: Knowledge is your best defense against emerging threats. Take the time to educate yourself and those around you about the dangers of voice cloning. Be skeptical of unsolicited calls, especially if they involve urgent requests that offer suspicious information or try to get you to engage in behavior that sounds "off" (like sending gift cards to supposed relatives of friends).

5. Rely on trusted sources: Our information ecosystem is awash in lies and inaccurate information, but at least in the elections space we know whom to seek out for accurate information about the administration of elections: state and local election officials (and those who support their efforts).

6. Make a plan to vote in advance of Election Day: Devising a vote plan allows you to confirm when, where and how you can vote. It also enables you to consider alternatives in case your preferred plan for voting does not work out because of something unforeseen like an illness. Finally, planning makes it less likely that you'll be tricked by something like a voice cloning attack, even if it appears real.

Voice cloning attacks are part of the "new frontier" in malign efforts to meddle in U.S. elections. By staying informed, establishing safeguards, and remaining skeptical of unexpected communications, voters can increase their chances of thwarting these threats before they cause real damage.

IS THERE

From page 8

really just never know how election day results will unfold. And for the record, I do have personal reservations about each of the candidates thus far—yes, I do try to be a more discerning voter beyond just familial and mutual friend connections and such. Given those reservations, why wouldn't I drop my own name into the ballot box as well? With a campaign budget of zero dollars and zero cents, the best that I can hope for is that there are enough voters who—you guessed it—might be swayed by familial and mutual friend connections and such for me. It would be nice to hear more opinions about why I should or shouldn't do it.

"Men are haunted by the vastness of eternity. And so, we ask ourselves, will our actions echo across the centuries? Will strangers hear our names long after we are gone and wonder who we were… how bravely we fought, how fiercely we loved?" (*Troy*)

For anyone following or looking for a straight answer, I am leaning (pun intended for being physically lean) toward running. Is there no one else?

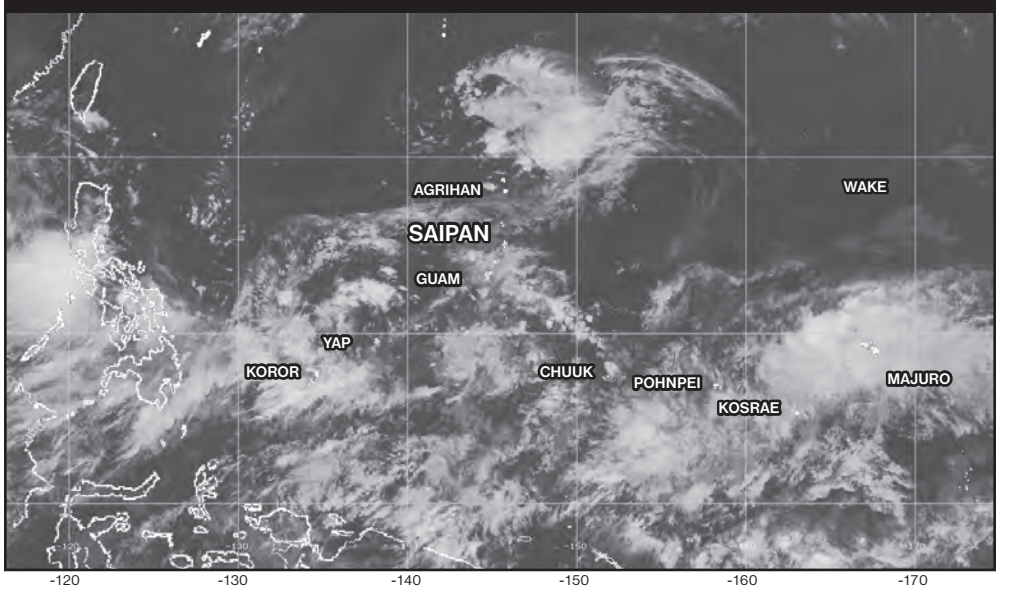
Biba CNMI!

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Partly sunny.	Scattered showers. Partly sunny.	A 30 percent chance of showers. Partly sunny.	A chance of showers. Partly sunny.	A chance of showers. Partly sunny.
86° 79°	87° 79°	87° 79°	87° 79°	87° 79°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 6:23 AM THURSDAY, JULY 18, 2024

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Model data has backed off a bit on rainfall amounts, but only a bit. Looks like the peak will be Friday, so hit that day with numerous showers as opposed to scattered for the rest of the week. The Ritidian buoy briefly spiked to a height of 6 to 8 feet yesterday, prompting the issuance of a high risk of rip currents. It has since settled back down to between 4 and 6 feet this morning, so allowed the high risk of rip currents to expire on schedule. The next week is going to be fairly rainy, so as usual, Liberation Day is probably going to be on the wet side for Guam…hopefully we can avoid a total washout though.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: https://www.weather.gov/gum/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorm	87° / 79°
Palau	Thunderstorm	85° / 76°
Yap	Mostly Cloudy	86° / 79°
Chuuk	Thunderstorm	88° / 79°
Pohnpei	Showers	87° / 77°
Kosrae	Rain	87° / 77°
Majuro	Thunderstorm	85° / 81°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	5:55 AM	6:50 PM
Saturday	5:56 AM	6:50 PM
Sunday	5:56 AM	6:50 PM
Monday	5:56 AM	6:50 PM
Tuesday	5:57 AM	6:49 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	3:17 AM	4:57 PM
Saturday	-	4:16 AM	5:57 PM
Sunday	-	5:19 AM	6:54 PM
Monday	-	6:23 AM	7:46 PM
Tuesday	-	7:27 AM	8:34 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Showers	61° / 54°
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	79° / 66°
Hong Kong	Thunderstorm	90° / 84°
Honolulu	Mostly Cloudy	87° / 75°
London	Partly Cloudy	79° / 57°
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	79° / 63°
Manila	Thunderstorm	91° / 79°
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	57° / 46°
Miami	Partly Cloudy	88° / 80°
New York	Partly Cloudy	83° / 73°
Osaka	Thunderstorm	84° / 73°
Paris	Cloudy	81° / 61°
Busan	Showers	75° / 72°
Rome	Partly Cloudy	86° / 70°
Salem	Partly Cloudy	94° / 74°
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	81° / 53°
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	88° / 70°
Tokyo	Thunderstorm	79° / 72°
Washington, DC	Thunderstorm	92° / 76°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
4:28 AM	High Tide	1.94
12:12 PM	Low Tide	-0.11
7:49 PM	High Tide	1.96
-	-	-

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JULY 1, 2024

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA076	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	11:50AM	2:25PM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily
UA193	6:50PM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:10PM	9:10PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

7C3403/2305	4:45AM	10:20PM	Daily
UA076/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	Daily via Guam
UA076/193	9:50AM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

TW308	3:15AM	7:00AM	Daily
7C3403	4:45AM	8:35AM	Daily
7C3405	4:10PM	7:45PM	Daily
7C3471	5:50PM	9:30PM	Daily from July 17

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

HX77	4:05AM	7:00AM	1, 5

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:50AM	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	5:30PM	9:55PM	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:25PM	4:20AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA192	10:25PM	6:15AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
PR110	10:30PM	4:25AM+1	Daily
UA184	11:50PM	5:45AM+1	2, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA192/174	10:25PM	8:50AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA184/174	10:25PM	8:50AM +1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
7C2306/3406	11:10PM	3:10PM+1	Daily
UA184/174	11:50PM	8:50AM +1	2, 5 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3406	9:30AM	3:10PM	Daily
7C3472	11:05AM	4:40PM	Daily
TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	Daily
7C3404	10:10PM	3:40AM+1	Daily

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

HX76	7:25PM	2:35AM+1	4, 7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 2, 2024

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Daily
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1206	SAIPAN	TINIAN	14:00	14:15	Daily
1207	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1209	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2101	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2106	TINIAN	SAIPAN	14:30	14:45	Daily
2107	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2109	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

CHCC

Combination photos show interns of Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.'s 2024 Summer Youth Program-through Public Health Services pose for a group shot and pose with their mentors.

CHCC launches 2024 Summer Youth Program

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. has launched the 2024 Summer Youth Program-through Public Health Services. The internship opportunity is tailored for incoming junior and senior high school students for the 2024-2025 school year. This program aims to equip students with essential on-the-job skills while enabling them to positively impact public health within the community.

The Summer Youth interns will engage in projects with the Public Health Services Programs such as:

- Developing Health Promotion Materials
- Participate in exhibit booths, community outreaches, and presentations to promote vaccination services
- Setting up and providing health promotion resource booths at various community settings, such as agency programs, government offices, village centers, and other high traffic areas to promote vaccinations and assist community members with accessing vaccinations
- Assisting with data reviews by working alongside a variety of Public Health programs and community partners to identify clients served by the programs who are eligible for vaccinations

Ysabelle Achas, an upcoming senior at Marianas High School, is interning with the CHCC Immunization Program. "I hope to gain general knowledge of what goes on in the background of the hospital" Achas said. "I felt very encouraged to apply because this was an opportunity that doesn't show up very often and when I got the call that I was able to participate I felt very grateful," she added.

Rondelle Apostol, an upcoming junior from Marianas High School, is interning with the Non-Communicable Disease Program (NCDP). "What I am most looking forward to is joining the outreaches and meeting people from within the community," Apostol said. "Participating in this internship is a stepping stone for me and will really help me on my career development and get the skills and experience," he added. Apostol looks forward to playing a part of aiding the community and enhance the skills he learns as the internship continues.

This program was able to offer 20 students this internship opportunity and work for six weeks across the various Public Health Services programs on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. Funding was made available through an award from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. These programs provide a safe and supportive environment for the students to learn and grow; as well as allows them the opportunity to contribute to CHCC's mission to provide quality comprehensive health services and promote healthy environments for a resilient community. ***(PR)***

Free NMC info session on July 20

Northern Marianas College invites all community members interested in earning a college degree to attend a free information session on Saturday, July 20, 2024.

The info session will be held at the Olympio T. Borja Memorial Library (NMC Library) from 9am to 11:30am. The session will cover topics that include NMC's admissions process and financial aid options for the upcoming Fall 2024 semester.

Participants of the info session will qualify to have their application and placement test fees waived for NMC's upcoming Fall 2024 semester, a savings of about $75.

Incoming students who have attended a Start Smart Seminar, Cash for College, a Climb Higher Seminar, or other NMC events in the past months, are able to waive their application and placement test fees.

NMC offers several degree and certificate programs, including a Bachelor of Science in Education (Concentration in Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Rehabilitation and Human Services, or Special Education), Bachelor of Science in Business Management (Concentration in Accounting or without Concentration); Associate of Arts in Business, Associate of Applied Science in Business Administration (Emphasis in Accounting, Business Management, or Computer Applications), Associate of Applied Science in Hospitality Management, Associate of Arts in Liberal Arts (Emphasis in Education, Health and Physical Education, Pre-Engineering, Social Work, or without Emphasis), Associate of Science in Nursing, Associate of Science in Agriculture, Associate of Science in Natural Resource Management, Associate of Applied Science in Criminal Justice, and Associate of Science in Fire Science Technology. The certificate programs at NMC include Basic Law Enforcement, Business Management, Computer Applications, Early Childhood Education, Fire Science Technology, Hospitality Operations, Nursing Assistant, and Small Business Management.

NMC's Fall 2024 semester will begin on Aug. 19, 2024. A list of the classes that are offered can be found at www.marianas.edu. For additional information or inquiries, contact the Office of Admissions and Records at (670) 237-6769/70/71/72 or email oar@marianas.edu. ***(PR)***

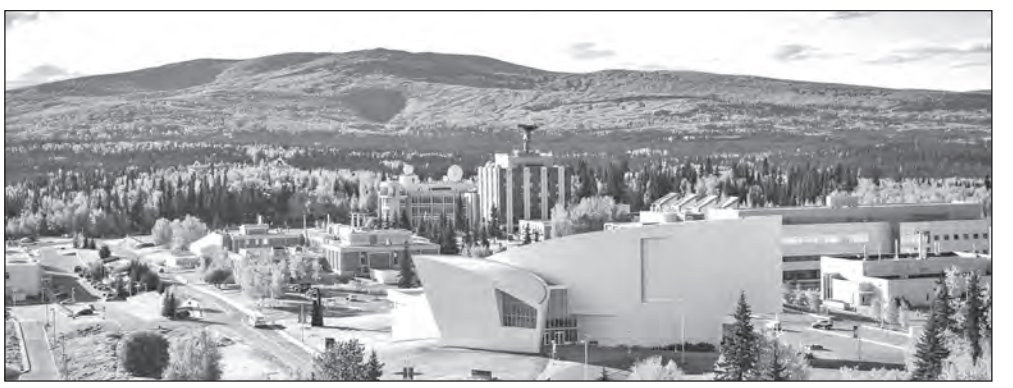
MLSC closed from July 22-26

The Marianas Office of Micronesian Legal Services Corp. will be closed from Monday, July 22, 2024, through Friday, July 26, 2024, for staff development. MLSC will not be available for any services during this time. MLSC will resume regular business hours on Monday, July 29, 2024. MLSC apologizes for the inconvenience. ***(PR)***

Carmen Jomel Rebuenog named to spring 2024 deans' list

FAIRBANKS, Alaska— Carmen Jomel Rebuenog of Saipan has been named to the spring 2024 deans' list at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Students receiving a 3.9 grade point average or higher are placed on the chancellor's list, while those receiving a grade point average of between 3.5 and 3.89 are named to the deans' list. The lists recognize students' outstanding academic achievements.



WWW.UAF.EDU

File photo of the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

UAF is a land, sea, and space grant institution and is the leading doctoral degree-granting institution in the state of Alaska. Since it was founded in 1917, UAF has been internationally recognized for research relating to the Arctic and sub-Arctic in areas such as biology, geophysics, engineering, natural resources and global climate change. ***(PR)***

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: AUGUST 2nd, 2024 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)

PROCUREMENT OF MOBILE DIGITAL X-RAY SYSTEM
(Outright Purchase, Shipping, Delivery, Installation, Training, and Commissioning)
for CHC Hospital / Radiology Department

RFP24-CHCC/ CAS-022

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.HEALTH]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSAL AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: AUGUST 2ND, 2024 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)

HOSPITAL PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM (HPP)
MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS (MRC)

RFP24-CHCC/HPP-MRC-021
"NEED ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION-MRC PROGRAM"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.HEALTH]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

RFP NO.: DPW24-RFP No.: 42400116

SUBMISSION DATE: August 08, 2024 TIME: 9:00 A.M.

"Engineering and Design Related Services"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

The project package will be available on or after **July 05, 2024** at Technical Services Division, Department of Public Works, located on Second Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, San Jose, Saipan.

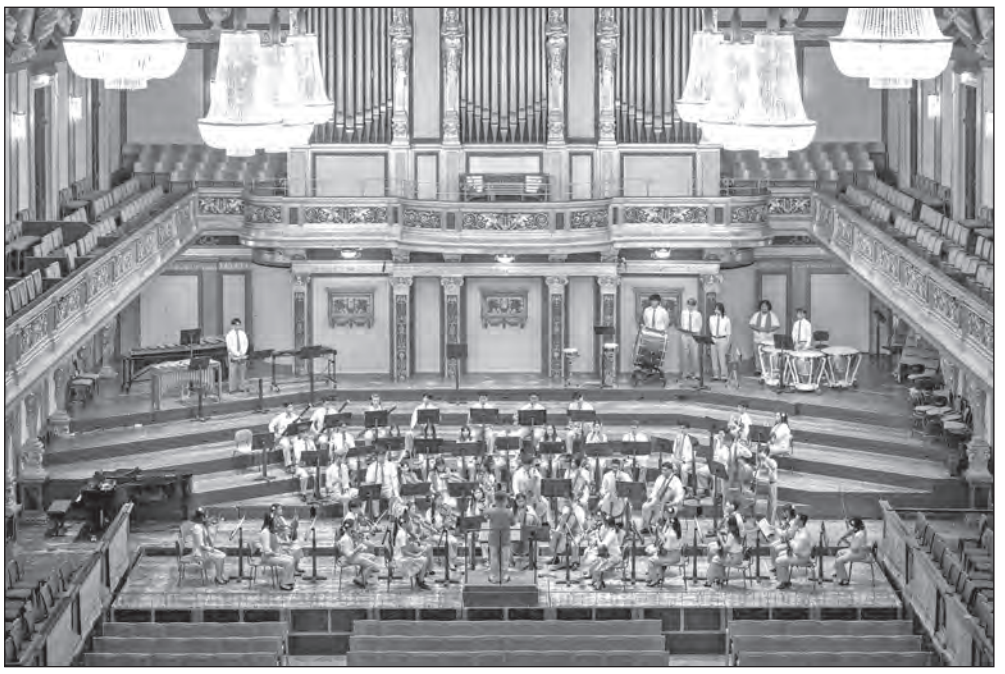
There will be a **Pre-Proposal Conference** for this project on **July 23, 2024, 9:00 a.m. ChST.,** at the **DPW Building Code Conference Room,** Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All questions regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **4:30 p.m. ChST., on July 31, 2024** to **Mr. Anhony A. Camacho, Acting Secretary of DPW,** Saipan. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ANTHONY A. CAMACHO
Acting Secretary, DPW

/S/ BRIEN SERS NICHOLAS JR.
Acting Director, Division of Procurement Services

Tumon Bay Youth Orchestra scores 3rd place with excellence



GEORG MAYER

The Tumon Bay Youth Orchestra at the Summa Cum Laude International Music Festival in Vienna, Austria.

GEORG MAYER

The Guam Territorial Band at the Summa Cum Laude International Music Festival in Vienna, Austria.

HAGÅTÑA, Guam—From July 5 to 9, 2024, Team Guam, USA comprised of the Guam Territorial Band—official band of Guam, USA (GTB)—and the Tumon Bay Youth Orchestra, became the first two ensembles from Guam to officially participate in the Summa Cum Laude International Music Festival which was held in Vienna, Austria.

The 2024 Summa Cum Laude International Music Festival hosted 37 orchestra, band and choir ensembles from 14 countries and included performances in several unique concert venues in Vienna, tours to famous museums and landmarks and music workshops at the University of Vienna. Learn more about the festival at sclfestival.org

Musical activities on tour began in the city of Salzburg, Austria with rehearsals and tours of local historic landmarks including Mozart's childhood home and famous scenes from The Sound of Music.

On July 6, the GTB, led by Jessica Pangelinan—the ensemble's ninth (first CHamoru woman) music director in its 48-year legacy—made Guam history with their Austrian debut concert at MuTh concert hall, the home of the Vienna Boys Choir. The concert also included musical performances by the TBYO and the Orchestra Magister Harmoniae di Associazione Musica Insieme APS from Italy.

On July 7, both groups performed at the Golden Hall of the Musikverein where TBYO performed as a competition ensemble and the GTB performed as a showcase celebration ensemble in front of fellow musicians, family members and a music jury panel. In the category of symphony orchestra, the Tumon Bay Youth Orchestra took home third place with excellence among the youth orchestras worldwide.

2024 Summa Cum Laude International Music Festival-Vienna, Austria

Symphony Orchestra Category

- 1st Place — China — Hong Kong
- 2nd Place — Spain
- 3rd Place — Guam, USA
- 4th Place — China — Taiwan
- 5th Place — Australia

On July 8, both ensembles participated in musical workshops led by festival jury members at the University of Vienna and later performed at historic Prater Amusement Park. July 9 marked the final day of the festival where festival participants were treated to a yodelling class prior to the closing Gala awards concert and farewell dinner.

GEORG MAYER

William Brandon Aydlett, timpanist of Team Guam and USA head of delegation, at the Summa Cum Laude International Music Festival in Vienna, Austria.

GEORG MAYER

Jessica Pangelinan, chief bandmaster of the Guam Territorial Band, at the Summa Cum Laude International Music Festival in Vienna, Austria.

The Guam Territorial Band, originally formed as a youth marching band to represent Guam at the Inaugural Parade for U.S. President Jimmy Carter in January 1977, is Guam's well decorated (internationally award-winning) community band who presents memorable band concerts locally and abroad. Membership into the band is open to musicians of all ages-from middle school to senior citizen. Learn more about the GTB at www.guamband.org.

The Tumon Bay Youth Orchestra was formed In September 2018 by the Guam Philharmonic Foundation, Incorporated to provide the youth of Guam and Micronesia the opportunity to perform orchestral music which includes the masterworks of centuries past to the latest movie soundtracks. TBYO now consists of two orchestras: a non-auditioned orchestra for youth with at least one year music ensemble experience and an auditioned group for youth with at least three years music ensemble experience. Potential members can learn more about TBYO's audition process at www.guamphilharmonic.org.

Team Guam, USA's trip to Austria is the second collaboration between the GTB and TBYO. In July 2019, both group represented Guam at the Australian International Music Festival and brought home double gold awards. Team Guam, USA would like to extend their sincerest thank you to their families, friends, supporters, and the community-at-large for their support in making this historic trip to Austria possible. Large kludos goes to W. Brandon Aydlett, Team Guam head of delegation and tour manager, for organizing the tour which consisted of 147+ musicians, support staff and family.

Both ensembles have open invitations to perform in Japan, South Korea, Carnegie Hall in New York, Sydney, Australia, and Africa in the upcoming years. New members for both ensembles are welcome at any time. Join now, practice and get your chance to perform on the world stage. ***(PR)***

GCC's Adult Education Department to host open house

The Guam Community College Adult Education Program Team is inviting everyone who is 18 years and older and not in high school to an open house this Friday, July 19, 2024, at 9am on the Mangilao campus. This event is for those who want to finish their high school diploma or GED, or take ESL (English as a Second Language) classes, or improve their skills in math and English.

Attendees at the open house will learn about the high school diploma program and how to get a GED. They can also get information about ESL classes and refresher courses in math and English. During the event, they will have a chance to tour the campus, see the classrooms and facilities, and meet current students and graduates of the programs. Additionally, the American Job Center will be there to help answer questions about job training and finding work.

This is a great chance for those looking to continue their education. Stop by and find all the resources available to help you reach your goals. GCC Adult Education staff and faculty will be present at the event to provide advice and support for planning the next chapter in your life of finishing your high school education.

"The Adult Education Programs Team will be present to guide potential participants through the enrollment process and share information about the program," said Mariesha Cruz-San Nicolas, GCC associate dean. "Taking that first step onto the campus will open many doors to achieving academic success and learning about career opportunities," she added.

Don't miss this opportunity to take the next step in your education and career! For more information, please contact the GCC Adult Education team at GCC Adult Education Open House.

- Date: Friday, July 19, 2024
- Time: 9am-12pm
- Location: 2nd floor, Building 6000, Guam Community College campus

For more information, contact John Dela Rosa, GCC assistant director of Communications & Promotions, at (671) 735-5638 (office), (671) 482-4320 (cell), or john.delarosa@guamcc.edu. ***(PR)***

Business

Mirage closes doors on Las Vegas Strip

LAS VEGAS (AP)—A final blast from The Mirage's signature volcano marked the passage Wednesday of an aging Las Vegas resort that wowed crowds when it opened in 1989 and went on to revolutionize the casino resort industry and reshape Las Vegas as a tourist destination.

"What would The Mirage be without one last volcano eruption?" asked Joe Lupo, property president of The Mirage, as he ended a closing ceremony that drew hundreds of onlookers, including 137 employees who worked at the 3,044-room resort from the beginning.

Jim Allen, head of the property's new owner, Florida-based Hard Rock International and Seminole Gaming, said work would "literally start tomorrow" to raze the volcano, which thatrumbled and gushed nightly for nearly 35 years.

Plans call for a 600-room hotel in the shape of a guitar that renderings depict with guitar string-like beams spiking into the night sky from a purplish 660-foot (201-meter) tower. Allen promised more details in months to come.

Lupo, who remains the property president following the change of hands, said the new Hard Rock Las Vegas will open in 2027.

Elaine Wynn, billionaire philanthropist and ex-wife of casino mogul Steve Wynn, who built the property, recalled that two performing tigers belonging to resort headliners Siegfried & Roy were the first "guests" through the door in November 1989. She said the first wave of people stopped, stared and applauded beneath the entry atrium. It featured lush tropical foliage beneath a domed glass ceiling and a faint piña colada scent in the air.

Its last week drew a frenzy of standing-room crowds wagering to win a total of $1.6 million in slot machine progressive jackpot winnings that state regulations said had to be disbursed to clear the books before the doors closed. Slot players lucky enough to get a seat vied for daily prize pots totaling up to $250,000 per day. Nevada Gaming Control Board spokesman Michael Lawton said Wednesday that he could not by law provide information about how the effort went.

Costing $630 million, The Mirage was no simple gambling hall. It was the world's largest hotel when it opened. Visitors were met by two bronze mermaid statues on the way to check in at a desk with a huge shark and fish tank behind it.

It had glitzy shops, celebrity chef restaurants and theater-size showrooms featuring headliners like Johnny Mathis, Kenny Rogers and Dolly Parton. The illusionist duo Siegfried & Roy and their tigers performed for 14 years, ending in 2003. Later, it became home to The Beatles-themed Cirque du Soleil show "Love," which ended its 18-year run this month.

"Instead of neon, a garden of dozens of rich Canary Island palm trees and a cool refreshing waterfall," Steve Wynn recalled in a statement of recollections he released Monday through his Las Vegas attorney, Donald Campbell. Wynn titled it "An Homage to Lady Mirage." He did not attend Wednesday's ceremonies.

In his statement, Wynn noted that The Mirage was the first new hotel in Las Vegas in several years and opened amid competition from casinos in Atlantic City, New Jersey, and the expansion of tribal gambling in California. He pointed to a decade-long resort building boom that followed, helping make Las Vegas one of the fastest-growing cities in America.

"To call The Mirage a catalyst would be an understatement," Wynn wrote.

By 2000, more than 30,000 new hotel rooms were added as new Las Vegas Strip resorts went up: Excalibur, Luxor, Treasure Island, MGM Grand, New York-New York, Monte Carlo, Bellagio, Mandalay Bay, Venetian and Paris Las Vegas. Many were funded by Wall Street bonds. Wynn bought and demolished the 50-year-old Desert Inn to build and open his eponymous Wynn Resort in 2005.

Wynn, now 82 and living in Florida, paid a $10 million fine to Nevada gambling regulators last year and cut ties with the industry he helped shape to end a yearslong legal fight stemming from media reports in 2018 that he sexually harassed or assaulted several women at his hotels. He has always denied the allegations.

Bo Bernhard, director of the International Gaming Institute at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, studies the emergence of what he terms the "fun economy" around the world. The Mirage, he said, set a standard for resort development in places like Singapore and Sydney.

Japan's trade deficit for 1st half declines as its exports recover

TOKYO (AP)—Japan posted a trade surplus in June, the first in three months, highlighting a recovery in exports, government data showed Thursday.

For the first six months of this year, Japan's trade deficit declined by more than half from the same period last year, to 3.23 trillion yen ($21 billion), according to Finance Ministry data.

The yen's weakness against the U.S. dollar has helped boost Japan's exports in recent months. The trade surplus in June grew five-fold from a year earlier to 224 billion yen, or $1.4 billion, on rising exports of vehicles and computer chips.

The weak yen works as a negative for Japan's imports, especially amid inflationary trends and rising energy costs. Resource-poor Japan imports almost all its energy.

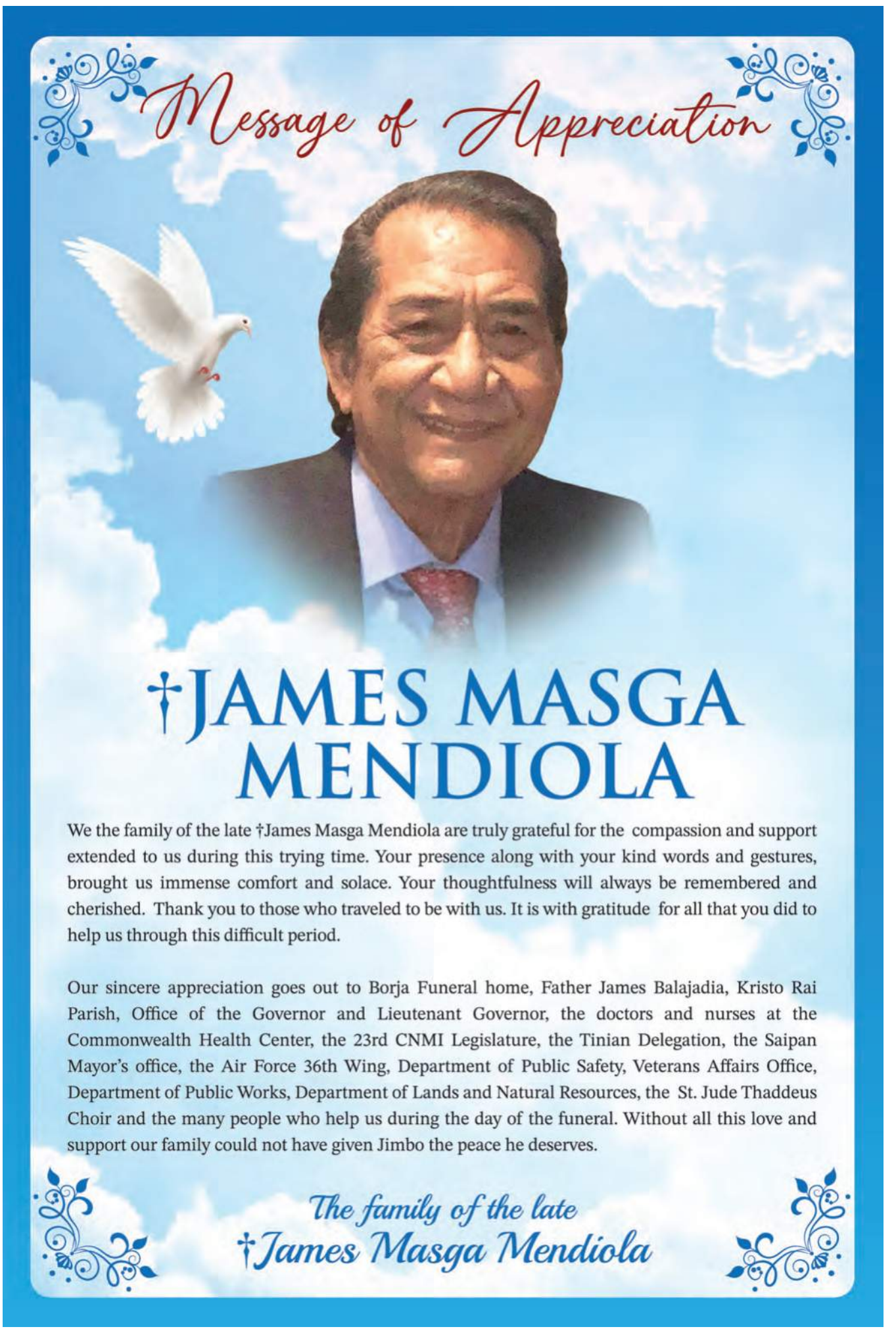
Japan has logged trade deficits for six straight fiscal half-years, starting with the final half of 2021, mainly because of the weak yen and rising global prices. Japan's fiscal year runs from April to March.

For the month of June, imports rose 3% to 8.98 trillion yen ($58 billion), while exports rose 5% to 9.2 trillion yen ($59 billion).

In the first six months of the year, imports rose 0.8% to 54.7 trillion yen ($350 billion), while exports gained nearly 9% to 51.5 trillion yen ($330 billion).

A report by economists at SMBC Nikko Securities, including Koya Miyamae, projects Japan's trade deficit will continue to decline. Exports to the U.S. and Asia rose, those to Europe are lagging, they said.

The U.S. dollar has been rising steading this year, hitting 160-yen levels in recent weeks. The dollar was trading at about 156 yen Thursday. Although a weak yen erodes Japan's purchasing power, it boosts the value of overseas earnings when converted into yen.


Message of Appreciation
†JAMES MASGA MENDIOLA
We the family of the late †James Masga Mendiola are truly grateful for the compassion and support extended to us during this trying time. Your presence along with your kind words and gestures, brought us immense comfort and solace. Your thoughtfulness will always be remembered and cherished. Thank you to those who traveled to be with us. It is with gratitude for all that you did to help us through this difficult period.
Our sincere appreciation goes out to Borja Funeral home, Father James Balajadia, Kristo Rai Parish, Office of the Governor and Lieutenant Governor, the doctors and nurses at the Commonwealth Health Center, the 23rd CNMI Legislature, the Tinian Delegation, the Saipan Mayor's office, the Air Force 36th Wing, Department of Public Safety, Veterans Affairs Office, Department of Public Works, Department of Lands and Natural Resources, the St. Jude Thaddeus Choir and the many people who help us during the day of the funeral. Without all this love and support our family could not have given Jimbo the peace he deserves.
The family of the late
†James Masga Mendiola

Nation

Biden will drop out of the presidential race?

AP

President Joe Biden waves as he walks down the steps of Air Force One at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware, Wednesday, July 17, 2024.

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Joe Biden has made it clear basically any which way you ask him: he's definitely, assuredly, "one thousand percent" staying in the presidential race.

But in response to questions from journalists over the last few weeks, the embattled Democratic president has given some clues as to what could make him step aside—especially as the calls from his own party to end his candidacy continue unabated.

Here are the things Biden has cited—some serious, others not—that would make him reconsider his run:

Divine intervention

It was a defiant answer that indicated Biden had no intention whatsoever of dropping out.

During an ABC News interview that marked the first major test of his fitness for office, anchor George Stephanopoulos asked the 81-year-old Biden whether he had convinced himself that only he could defeat his Republican opponent, Donald Trump.

"I have convinced myself of two things," Biden said. "I'm the most qualified person to beat him, and I know how to get things done."

Stephanopoulos pressed a little further: "If you can be convinced that you cannot defeat Donald Trump, will you stand down?"

"It depends," Biden responded. "I mean, if the Lord Almighty comes out and tells me that, I might do that."

Cold, hard data

No politician ever wants to lose—and it seems Biden would be willing to exit if he had numerical proof that that's what would happen.

In a news conference at the close of the NATO summit in Washington last week, Biden was asked whether he would step aside if aides showed him that Vice President Kamala Harris would be a stronger opponent than he would be against Trump.

Biden's initial response was "no," but then he elaborated.

"Unless they came back and said, 'there's no way you can win.' Me," he said. "No one is saying that. No poll says that."

» Here are four reasons he's cited

The limited polling available suggests a competitive race with several months before the election. Several polls of voters give Trump a slight advantage, while others show neither candidate with an advantage.

A fateful accident

Biden wasn't directly asked the hypothetical, but he threw in a new scenario anyway.

As Speedy Morman, a host on the entertainment network Complex, was wrapping up his interview with Biden last week in Detroit, he had one more closing question for the president: "We will 1,000 percent—in your words—see you on the ballot this November?"

Quipped Biden: "Unless I get hit by a train, yeah."

Morman responded: "Let's hope that doesn't happen, for your safety's concern."

A not-yet-diagnosed medical ailment

Biden spoke with BET journalist Ed Gordon for an interview set to air Wednesday night. During the conversation, Gordon asked Biden if there were any factors that would make him reevaluate his candidacy.

He didn't repeat the other reasons that he had previously listed—but rather surfaced a new one.

"If I had some medical condition that emerged," Biden told Gordon. "If doctors came to me and said, 'you got this problem, that problem.'"

The health of Biden, the oldest person to be U.S. president, has been scrutinized well before his catastrophic debate performance.

After his latest physical in February, presidential doctor Kevin O'Connor said Biden "remains fit to successfully execute the duties of the presidency." A neurological exam, taken more than a month prior, showed no signs of a stroke, multiple sclerosis or Parkinson's disease, according to O'Connor. The physician also said a cognitive exam was unnecessary.

Biden tested positive for COVID-19 Wednesday while trying to shore up support among disenchanted voters key to his reelection chances. The diagnosis prompted him to cancel a meeting with members of a Latino civil rights organization in the battleground state of Nevada.

World

UKRAINE DEFENSE CHIEF:

Ukraine will find a way no matter who wins US election

ASPEN, Colorado (AP)—Ukraine will find a way to deal with whatever comes if former President Donald Trump wins a second term, throwing into doubt vital U.S. support for its defense against Russia's invading forces, Ukraine's defense minister said Wednesday.

In carefully framed comments to an audience of U.S. policymakers and journalists, Defense Minister Rustem Umerov reflected the diplomatic and military difficulty facing Ukraine as Trump and running mate JD Vance gain momentum in the U.S. presidential race.

Vance, an Ohio senator, has battled in Congress to block U.S. military and financial aid to Ukraine as it fights Russian forces and cross-border attacks, while Trump has said he will bring the war to an immediate end if he wins in November.

Trump, a Republican, has not said how he would do that. Analysts say that could include withdrawal of U.S. aid to Ukraine unless it agrees to a cease-fire on Russian terms, including surrendering Ukrainian territory to Russia.

"We believe in U.S. leadership, and we believe America wants its partners and allies to be strong as well," Umerov said, speaking remotely to an audience of government officials and others at the annual Aspen Security Forum in Colorado.

"At this stage, we will focus on the battlefield," Umerov said.

"Whatever the outcome" of the U.S. elections, "we will find solutions," he said.

Umerov, much like Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy at the NATO summit in Washington last week, stopped short of saying whether Ukraine would attempt to keep fighting or would agree to a cease-fire deal that ceded territory to Russia if the U.S. were to withdraw its support.

While other members of the military alliance of European and North American countries also help provide arms, money and other aid to Ukraine, U.S. support has been the most invaluable since Russia launched its war in early 2022.

For now, Umerov insisted that Ukraine—which has broadened its mobilization efforts to bring in more troops than the 4 million Umerov said were now registered—would keep fighting to regain territory already lost to the Russians.

It was "within our goals" to take back the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, seized by Russians early in their offensive, he said.

The defense minister also pushed back against President Joe Biden on one point, although not by name. While Biden has been the most important single backer of Ukraine's defense, he has resisted growing pressure to roll back tough restrictions placed on Ukraine's use of U.S. weapons against military targets in Russia. Biden suggested at the NATO summit that Ukraine might use the weapons to hit Moscow.

Umerov said Ukraine couldn't stop Russian strikes on its cities and infrastructure unless it could hit the airbases and other military sites in Russia from which the strikes come.

Global rights group finds Hamas-led militants committed war crimes on Oct. 7

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP)—Hamas-led armed groups committed numerous war crimes during the Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel that precipitated the ongoing war in the Gaza Strip, according to a global human rights group report released Wednesday.

Human Rights Watch said the acts of the Palestinian fighters, who killed around 1,200 people and kidnapped more than 250 during the attack, met the international legal definition for crimes against humanity and war crimes.

The group's report found that five different Palestinian armed groups, led by Hamas' Qassam Brigades, engaged in war crimes and violated international law by killing, torturing, taking hostages, looting and committing crimes involving sexual and gender-based violence. The New York-based rights group said its researchers were unable to independently verify claims of sexual violence and rape but that they relied on a separate report by a special U.N. envoy who found "reasonable grounds" to believe Hamas fighters committed sexual violence during the attack.

The 230-page HRW report focuses only on the Oct. 7 attacks and does not examine the actions taken by Hamas or Israel during the subsequent war in Gaza. More than 38,400 people have been killed in Israeli ground offensives and bombardments in Gaza since the war began, according to the territory's Health Ministry. The ministry does not distinguish between combatants and civilians in its count.

The militants committed a crime against humanity because they launched a "widespread attack directed against a civilian population," said Belkis Wille, an associate director at HRW who arrived in Israel days after Oct. 7 and spent a month researching the attack with local staff. The researchers examined Palestinian attacks on 26 civilian sites in southern Israel, including kibbutzim, cities, two music festivals and a beach party, and they spoke with nearly 100 survivors, and 50 experts and first responders.

"The killing of civilians and taking of hostages were all central aims of the planned attack, and not actions that occurred as an afterthought or as a plan gone awry, or as isolated acts, for example, perpetrated by unaffiliated Palestinians from Gaza," Wille said.

After reviewing hundreds of photos and videos, the researchers determined that the majority of the Palestinians who took part in the attack were affiliated with armed groups and were not random civilians who took advantage of the open fence.

"That was a claim that was made very early on, it was made by Hamas in order to distance its own fighters from the abuses, and it was made by Israel to justify attacks on civilians in Gaza," she said.

Life & Style

‘The Bear’ sets comedy series record with 23 Emmy nominees

LOS ANGELES (AP)—“The Bear” went on a tear at Wednesday morning’s Emmy nominations with a comedy-series record 23, and “Shogun” led all nominees with 25 in a dominant year across categories for FX.

Nominations for the “The Bear,” up for its second season in which its rag-tag band of sandwich makers tries to create an elite restaurant, included best comedy series and best actor in a comedy series for Jeremy Allen White—both awards it won at January’s strike-delayed ceremony—along with best actress for Ayo Edebiri, who won best supporting actress last time around.

» ‘Shogun’ leads all nominees with 25

It was also boosted by a bounty of guest acting nominations, including Jamie Lee Curtis and Olivia Colman, two of many Oscar winners who landed nominations.

“Shogun” took full advantage of the absence of last year’s top three nominees—“Succession,” “The White Lotus” and “The Last of Us” – to dominate in drama and give FX, with 93 overall nominations, the kind of strong year often reserved for HBO, which even in this “off” year received 91.

Its nominations included best drama series, best actress in a drama series for Anna Sawai and best actor for Hiroyuki Sanada.

The show shook up the drama race when its makers said in May that despite reaching the end of the story of James Clavell’s novel about political machinations in early 17th century Japan, they would explore making more than one season, shifting the critical darling from the limited series category to the more prestigious drama one.

“True Detective: Night Country” was a bright spot for HBO, which lost “Succession” to retirement and is between seasons on “The White Lotus” and “The Last of Us.”

The show, a semi-spinoff of the “True Detective” franchise, led all limited or anthology series nominees with 19, including a best actress nomination for Jodie Foster for playing a police chief investigating mysterious deaths in the darkness of a north Alaskan winter.

Kali Reis, who plays Foster’s investigating partner and rival on the show and is nominated for best supporting actress in a limited series, joins Lily Gladstone, in the same category for “Under the Bridge,” as the first Indigenous women to get Emmy acting nominations. D’Pharaoh Woon-A-Tai of “Reservation Dogs” becomes the first Indigenous actor to be recognized for lead with his best actor in a comedy nom.

The only previous Indigenous acting nominee, according to Variety, was August Schellenberg, who received an Emmy nomination in 2007 for his performance as Sitting Bull in the HBO TV movie “Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee.”

“True Detective” is expected to vie for the best limited series Emmy with “Fargo,” which had 15 nominations and gives FX a shot at a triple crown if its favorites win drama and comedy series.

Netflix has its own pair of contenders in the category. “Baby Reindeer” became a minor cultural phenomenon and Emmy upstart in recent months. It got 11 nominations, including best actor for star and creator Richard Gadd. “Ripley,” a black-and-white retelling of Patricia Highsmith’s novel “The Talented Mr. Ripley,” got 13 nominations including acting nods for Andrew Scott and Dakota Fanning. The shows along dozens of acknowledgements in craft and comedy special categories, helped Netflix lead all outlets with 107 nominations.

Foster was another of the Academy Award winners to get Emmy nods, along with fellow multiple Oscar winner Meryl Streep, up for best supporting actress in a comedy for “Only Murders in the Building;” reigning best supporting actor winner Robert Downey Jr., up for best supporting actor in a limited series for playing several characters in “The Sympathizer;” and Gary Oldman, up for best actor in a drama series for “Slow Horses.”

“Only Murders,” a perennial Emmy nominee for Hulu with few wins, outdid itself this year with 21, behind only “Shogun” and “The Bear.” Leads Steve Martin and Martin Short were nominated for best actor, and, in her first Emmy nomination as a performer, Selena Gomez got a nod for best actress.

Old Emmy favorites also returned. Jon Hamm, who had one Emmy from 16 previous nominations, most of them for “Mad Men,” got two nominations, one for actor in a limited or anthology series for “Fargo” and another for supporting actor in a drama for “The Morning Show.” His “Morning Show” castmate Jennifer Aniston is considered by many the favorite to win the best drama actress Emmy to go with the comedy actress trophy she won for “Friends.”

AP

This image released by FX shows Jeremy Allen White as Carmen Berzatto, in a scene from “The Bear.”

And four-time Emmy winner Tony Shalhoub has a shot at his fifth for reprising his role as Adrian Monk in “Mr. Monk’s Last Case: A Monk Movie.”

Former “Saturday Night Live” and “Bridesmaids” co-stars Kristen Wiig and Maya Rudolph each landed best actress in a comedy noms for Apple TV+ shows about wealthy women: Wiig for “Palm Royale” and Rudolph for “Loot.” Each also were nominated for their returns to host “SNL.”

Movie armorer seeks dismissal of her conviction or new trial in fatal shooting by Alec Baldwin

SANTA FE, N.M. (AP)—A movie armorer has asked a judge to dismiss her involuntary manslaughter conviction or convene a new trial in the shooting death of a cinematographer by actor Alec Baldwin, alleging suppression of evidence and misconduct by the prosecution.

In a court filing Tuesday, defense counsel for armorer Hannah Gutierrez-Reed argued her case should be reconsidered because prosecutors failed to share evidence that might have been exculpatory.

Judge Mary Marlowe Sommer last week brought Baldwin’s trial to a sudden and stunning end based on misconduct of police and prosecutors over the withholding of evidence from the defense in the 2021 shooting of cinematographer Halyna Hutchins on the set of the film “Rust.”

“This court stated on July 12 that the integrity of the judicial system demanded that the court dismiss Mr. Baldwin’s case with prejudice,” said defense attorney Jason Bowles in the new court filing. “How can it be any different with Ms. Gutierrez-Reed’s case, with this proven litany of serious discovery abuses?”

Kari Morrissey—lead prosecutor in both the Baldwin and Gutierrez-Reed cases—said her written response would be filed in court next week, declining further comment.

The case-ending evidence at Baldwin’s trial was ammunition that was brought into the sheriff’s office in March by a man who said it could be related to Hutchins’ killing. Prosecutors said they deemed the ammo unrelated and unimportant, while Baldwin’s lawyers alleged they “buried” it and filed a motion to dismiss the case.

Gutierrez-Reed was convicted by a jury in March in a trial overseen by Judge Marlowe Sommer, who later assigned the maximum 18-month penalty. Gutierrez-Reed already has an appeal pending in a higher court on the involuntary manslaughter conviction.

Prosecutors blamed Gutierrez-Reed for unwittingly bringing live ammunition onto the set of “Rust,” where it was expressly prohibited, and for failing to follow basic gun safety protocols.

Troubling memories about dad haunt his daughter

DEAR ABBY: When I was young and even as I grew older, my father touched me inappropriately. It made me uncomfortable even as an adult. I feel like when I was very small, something more may have happened. I may have been drugged to keep me from remembering. I know a few weird things that went on, and my mother knew about it. I always felt uncomfortable around him. Yet I loved my parents very much. I have the weirdest dreams about them doing things to me that I don’t like.

I have been in therapy before but not necessarily about this issue. I know I was my father’s favorite child because I was always pleasant, more than my sister. Our parents are both dead now and have been for many years. I don’t want to think bad thoughts about them, but I wish I knew for sure what happened. Do you have any advice for me? I hate myself for thinking bad about the parents I loved so much. They were good to me and my sister growing up.

NEEDING CLARITY IN ALABAMA

DEAR NEEDING CLARITY: The first person you should talk to about this is your sister, who was always “less pleasant” to your father than you were. It might be enlightening. However, if it isn’t, please talk with a licensed psychotherapist about your persistent bad dreams. It won’t be the first time a therapist has heard a story like this, and you deserve to have peace of mind.

■■■■

DEAR ABBY: My daughter-in-law has turned my son away from his sister. It has gotten so bad he no longer wants me to tell him anything about her or her family, and I am to tell my daughter nothing about his family. I am elderly and do not need this on my head. I love my son and I really liked my DIL, but she has changed. My son does nothing without first asking her.

I have only one son and one daughter, and it troubles me that when I pass, they won’t have each other. My daughter recently had a kidney removed because of cancer, but my DIL insists she never had cancer. My DIL has MS and is very negative about life. She can still walk, drive and has been very lucky. Please help me. I love them all and I am so upset. What can I do about this?

SAD MOM IN TEXAS

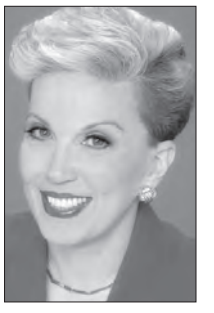
DEAR MOM: There is nothing you can do about this sorry situation. Your daughter-in-law’s denial of your daughter’s cancer surgery could easily be overcome if your daughter were to show her brother her medical records. For whatever reason, your daughter-in-law has decided that all of her husband’s attention should be directed toward her (and her own illness) rather than toward his sister. All you can do at this point and beyond is see your children separately, as often as you can, and hope they both stay safe, healthy and close by as long as they have you.

■■■■

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



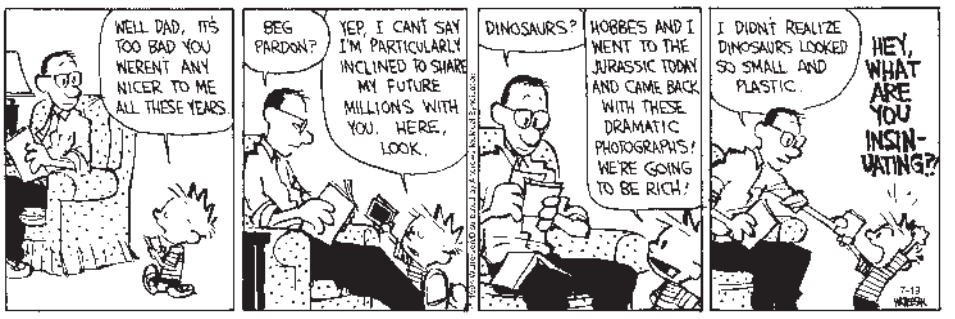
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

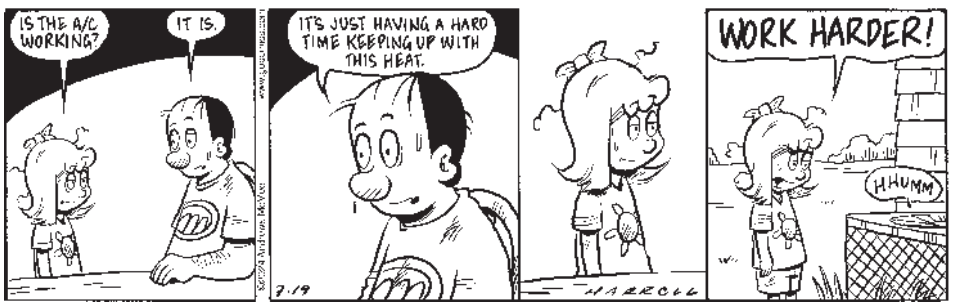

WELL DAD, IT'S TOO BAD YOU WEREN'T ANY NICER TO ME ALL THESE YEARS.
BEG PARDON?
YEP, I CAN'T SAY I'M PARTICULARLY INCLINED TO SHARE MY FUTURE MILLIONS WITH YOU. HERE, LOOK.
DINOSAURS?
HOBBES AND I WENT TO THE JURASSIC TODAY AND CAME BACK WITH THESE DRAMATIC PHOTOGRAPHS! WE'RE GOING TO BE RICH!
I DIDN'T REALIZE DINOSAURS LOOKED SO SMALL AND PLASTIC.
HEY, WHAT ARE YOU INSINUATING?!

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

SO, DO YOU HAVE ANY HOT FRIENDS?
WHAT KIND OF QUESTION IS THAT TO ASK ON A FIRST DATE?!
SORRY. DO YOU HAVE ANY FRIENDS THAT AREN'T UGLY?

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Irate
4 Mac alternatives
7 Ballet leaps
12 "I love," in Latin
13 — chi
14 Russian range
15 "Shoo!"
16 Type of law that opposes monopolies
18 Chemical suffix
19 Fry lightly
20 Mrs. Dithers
22 Summer hrs.
23 Vipers
27 Tony winner Hagen
29 Dairy product
31 Hosiery shade
34 Overcaffeinated
35 Supernatural
37 N.J. neighbor
38 Afrikaner
39 Shock partner
41 "30 for 30" network
45 Attempts
47 Status —
48 Trattoria appetizers
52 Last (Abbr.)
53 Lift
54 Great weight
55 "Do — say!"
56 Beet variety
57 Hesitant sounds
58 Hamilton bill

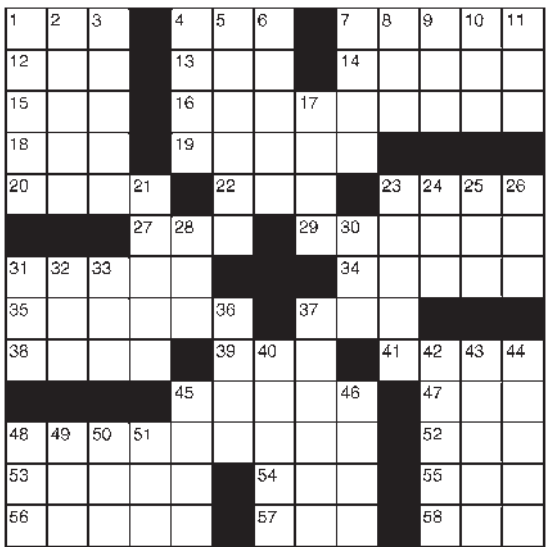
DOWN

1 Wizardry
2 Acid in proteins
3 Indulgent nana, e.g.
4 School orgs.
5 Manitoba's land
6 Original position
7 Burlap fiber
8 Blunder
9 Sigma follower
10 Golfer Ernie
11 Retired jet
17 Wee
21 Foretell
23 Limber
24 California's Big —
25 Opposite of "post-"
26 Norm (Abbr.)
28 — Aviv
30 Have bills
31 Short do
32 Green prefix
33 "Rocks"
36 "See ya!"
37 Borrower
40 Squander
42 Hunker down
43 Sign of life
44 Away from the office
45 Raced
46 Deadly septet
48 Rainbow shape
49 Slangy denial
50 — Maria
51 Leb. neighbor

Solution time: 25 mins.

W	A	S		H	A	T	S		T	A	B	S
E	F	T		O	A	H	U		E	S	A	U
S	T	O	P	T	H	A	T		L	I	R	E
		P	O	D		I	R	E	L	A	N	D
I	F	G	I	O	N		A	G	F			
A	G	A		G	O	B		O	R	D	E	R
C	A	P	S		G	I	L		S	E	R	A
E	N	S	U	E		D	O	C		A	N	N
			R	A	S		L	A	N	D	E	D
S	P	I	N	A	C	H		S	O	S		
A	L	D	A		R	E	S	T	S	T	O	P
R	O	O	M		O	M	A	N		O	N	O
I	D	L	E		D	I	D	O		P	A	X

Yesterday's answer 7-19



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Trai Byers, 41; Jared Padalecki, 42; Benedict Cumberbatch, 48; Nancy Carell, 58.

Happy Birthday: Keep sight of your dreams and hopes. Elaborate, set a plan in motion and carry out your wishes to the max this year. Indulge in events and activities that help build enthusiasm and connections that point you in the right direction. Curb spending, and budget wisely for the things you require to meet demands. Protect your rights and stand up to emotional manipulation. Your numbers are 9, 14, 23, 27, 31, 35, 43.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Snap up any opportunity that comes your way. Use your intelligence, ingenuity and ability to act fast to beat anyone trying to compete with you. Arrange to do something entertaining with someone you love. Personal gains look promising, and romance is favored. ✪✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Stick close to home and make changes that make life easier. A change of plans will leave you in the lurch. Don't pay for someone else's mistake. Set the record straight and avoid situations that don't meet your criteria. Pay attention to detail. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Pay attention to how you present yourself. Update your look, pick up a new hobby or plan a day trip that will offer insight into personal growth and better lifestyles. Consider the possibilities, and make decisions that allow you to add to your qualifications. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Take nothing for granted. Follow up, verify and walk away from indecency and misleading information. Distance yourself from anyone trying to pressure you to adopt their beliefs. Let your originality shine through, and stand up for what's right. You will make a difference. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Stay tuned in and ready to move out of the line of fire. Refrain from getting caught in other people's drama or taking the fall for something you didn't do. It's up to you to maintain control and call the shots if you want to win. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Be open to information and change, but be careful not to let anyone push you in a direction that's more reflective of them than you. It's in your best interest to take the path that leads to progress and utilizes what you do best to reach your goal. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Take the initiative to get things done, and live up to your promises before someone complains or criticizes you. Timeliness will be advantageous and win you favors, as well as the support you need to follow through with your plans. A connection you make looks inviting. ✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Put your differences aside and do whatever it takes to take care of business. Use your creativity and intuition to attract interest, but wait for a better proposal before you agree to participate. Don't believe everything you hear. Protect your health and well-being from injury and heartbreak. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* A clear mind will help you sort through what's feasible and worthwhile. Pay attention to what things cost and how to get the most for your money. Prepare to barter and outmaneuver anyone who tries to take advantage of you. Love and romance are in the stars. ✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Stick to the truth, set goals, establish what you are willing to do and entertain the people who can help you get where you want. Be proactive and respond appropriately; you'll gain respect and interest in your achievements. Nurture meaningful relationships. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Take care of domestic issues and make your surroundings functional. Sorting through any differences you have with someone you love will bring you closer together. Take advantage of a unique opportunity, and enjoy the benefits that follow. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* A change will offer a different perspective regarding new possibilities and what's available. Participate in activities that require discipline and imagination, and you will shine. Your adaptability will attract attention. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are energetic, unique and transparent. You are expressive and powerful.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	2			9				3
5		9				7		4
3		7	6					
	5		7	2		4		
						9		
	4			5				8
	3				6	8	1	
						3		
7				4				2

Difficulty: ★★★★ 7/19

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

5	4	2	8	9	3	1	7	6
3	8	9	6	1	7	5	4	2
1	7	6	4	2	5	9	3	8
2	9	1	7	4	8	6	5	3
7	5	3	9	6	2	8	1	4
8	6	4	3	5	1	7	2	9
6	1	8	2	7	4	3	9	5
4	3	5	1	8	9	2	6	7
9	2	7	5	3	6	4	8	1

Difficulty: ★★★ 7/18

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

DIETARY RESTRICTIONS **Solution: 11 letters**

M	P	L	E	Y	R	I	A	D	O	I	N	T	E	Y
E	E	S	I	G	B	A	R	I	A	T	R	I	C	C
D	A	D	E	F	G	Y	D	N	A	C	E	I	N	N
I	N	D	I	G	E	S	T	I	V	E	P	K	E	A
C	U	H	P	T	N	S	L	N	E	S	D	O	R	N
A	T	C	A	N	E	A	T	G	L	T	E	E	E	G
L	H	R	L	E	C	R	H	Y	L	R	K	S	F	E
I	T	A	E	T	N	S	R	C	L	E	A	N	E	R
Q	L	T	O	U	S	O	E	A	N	E	B	I	R	P
U	A	S	T	L	A	D	K	A	N	U	A	A	P	R
I	E	S	S	G	L	I	V	O	F	E	L	R	L	E
D	H	C	U	L	T	U	R	E	S	O	A	G	A	P
R	A	G	U	S	A	M	N	O	G	H	O	N	L	A
D	I	S	E	A	S	E	Y	E	N	A	E	D	A	R
W	H	E	A	T	A	E	M	C	M	E	N	R	H	E

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Baked, Bariatric, Candy, Changes, Cultures, Dairy, Diet, Digestive, Dining, Disease, Eggs, Gluten, Grains, Halal, Health, Keto, Kosher, Label, Lactose, Lifestyle, Liquid, Lunch, Meals, Meat, Medical, Mediterranean, Menu, Nuts, Paleo, Peanut, Preference, Pregnancy, Prepare, Salt, Seafood, Sodium, Soy, Spicy, Starch, Sugar, Vegan, Wheat

Yesterday's Answer: Friends

The NEW **TELEWORD VINTAGE COLLECTION EDITION** #1 can be purchased on line at www.WonderWordBooks.com. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

Jarren Duran's 2-run HR gives AL a 5-3 win over NL

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — Speedy Jarren Duran describes himself as a player who keeps his head down, works hard and never thinks of himself as being better than anybody else.

Duran turned some heads in his first All-Star Game, hitting a tiebreaking two-run homer for the American League and being awarded the MVP trophy named after Boston Red Sox legend Ted Williams.

"That's an honor. Who else would I want to try to follow in the footsteps of besides a guy like that, who is not just a great baseball player but a great human being," Duran said after becoming the fifth Red Sox player selected All-Star Game MVP. "That guy was awesome, and I'm honored to be able to have his award."

The decisive homer came in the fifth inning Tuesday night as the AL beat the National League 5-3 for its 10th win in the past 11 All-Star Games.

Pittsburgh rookie Paul Skenes pitched a hitless first for the NL, twice hitting 100 mph, and Shohei Ohtani also went deep in Texas with a three-run homer for a 3-0 lead in the third.

Juan Soto hit a two-run double and scored on David Fry's single to tie the score in the AL third, and Duran went deep off Cincinnati's Hunter Greene.

"It's a surreal moment. So I'm just thankful to be here," said Duran, who was one of 39 first-time All-Stars this year.

Oakland right-hander Mason Miller got the win after throwing a 103.6 mph pitch, the fastest in the All-Star Game since tracking began in 2008. Hard-throwing Cleveland closer Emmanuel Clase struck out two in the ninth for the save.

AP

American League's Jarren Duran, of the Boston Red Sox, hits a home run during the fifth inning of the MLB All-Star baseball game, Tuesday, July 16, 2024, in Arlington, Texas. A

The 22-year-old Skenes, who has pitched only 11 big league games since being the No. 1 overall pick in the draft last July, became the first rookie starter since 1995 and had the fewest games played for any player to make an All-Star team. The right-hander threw a hitless first, with a two-out walk to Soto before his Yankees teammate Aaron Judge grounded into a forceout on the next pitch.

Skenes threw 11 of 16 pitches for strikes, with seven fastballs up to 100.1 mph.

"Frankly, I wish I'd had a few more pitches to do that today," said Skenes, who has a good mix of pitches to go with the hard stuff. "It's cool to bring eyes to the game."

Ohtani, who has gone deep 29 times in the first season of his record $700 million, 10-year deal with the Los Angeles Dodgers, pulled a 400-foot drive to right off Tanner Houck. That came after the Boston right-hander allowed singles to the first two batters he faced: No. 9 batter Jurickson Profar and leadoff hitter Ketel Marte.

"I haven't really hit well in the All-Star Game, so I'm just relieved that I put the ball in play," Ohtani said. "I just focused on having a regular at-bat as if I was in the regular season."

When Ohtani went against Miller in the fifth, he struck out on an 89.2 mph slider well inside and out of the strike zone. That was after twice taking strikes on fastballs of more than 100 mph.

Ohtani's first All-Star homer made him the first Dodgers player to go deep in the Midsummer Classic since Hall of Fame catcher Mike Piazza in 1996. Eleven days after his 30th birthday, Ohtani was an All-Star for the fourth time — his first with the NL.

Baltimore's Anthony Santander, after taking over for Soto in right field, had a two-out single in the fifth before Duran's 413-foot homer to right-center after he had replaced Judge in center. Duran took a 95.9 mph fastball before going deep on an 86 mph splitter.

"I knew he threw really hard so I was just praying he would throw me a first pitch fastball so I could see how hard it was. After that, I was hoping to get a pitch up," Duran said. "He happened to leave a pitch up. I happened to put a good swing on it."

The last Red Sox player to be the All-Star MVP was J.D. Drew in 2008, following Pedro Martinez in 1999, Roger Clemens in 1986 and Carl Yastrzemski in 1970.

Duran was voted by his peers as an All-Star after being the first AL player to go into the break with at least 100 hits, 10 triples, 10 homers and 20 stolen bases.

The AL has a 48-44-2 record in the All-Star Game, and had won nine in a row before the National League's 3-2 victory last year in Seattle.

AL starter Corbin Burnes arrived in Texas the morning of the game after spending time at home with his newborn twin daughters. The Baltimore right-hander allowed a walk and then a two-out double to Bryce Harper before getting out of his inning on a comebacker by William Contreras, his catcher last season in Milwaukee.

After his underhand toss of the ball to first base, Burnes had a big smile on his face when he kept jogging and wrapped his arm around Contreras on the baseline.

Quick game

Played in 2 hours, 28 minutes, it was the shortest All-Star Game since 1988, a game that the AL won 2-1 in Cincinnati that took only two minutes less.

Won in both leagues

Bruce Bochy of the host Rangers became the first manager to win World Series titles and All-Star Games in both leagues. Bochy is now 2-3 as an All-Star manager, leading the NL to a win in 2011. He won the World Series three times with the NL's San Francisco Giants in 2010, 2012 and 2014, then led the Rangers to their first championship in his debut season with them last year.

Up next

The MLB regular series resumes Friday when 14 games are scheduled, with Milwaukee and Minnesota the only teams that won't play until Saturday. Philadelphia (62-34) has the best record in the majors and Cleveland (58-37) has an AL-best .611 winning percentage, though Baltimore and the New York Yankees also have 58 wins.

Robot umpire challenge system could be tested next spring training

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP)—Major League Baseball could test robot umpires as part of a challenge system in spring training next year, which could lead to regular-season use in 2026.

MLB has been experimenting with the automated ball-strike system in the minor leagues since 2019 but is still working on the shape of the strike zone.

"I said at the owners meeting it is not likely that we would bring ABS to the big leagues without a spring training test. OK, so if it's '24 that leaves me '25 as the year to do your spring training test if we can get these issues resolved, which would make '26 a viable possibility," baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred said Tuesday during a meeting with the Baseball Writers' Association of America. "But is that going to be the year? I'm not going to be flat-footed on that issue.

"We have made material progress. I think that the technology is good to a 100th of an inch. The technology in terms of the path of the ball is pluperfect."

Triple-A ballparks have used ABS this year for the second straight season, but there is little desire to call the strike zone as the cube defined in the rule book and MLB has experimented with modifications during minor league testing.

» 2026 regular-season use possible

The ABS currently calls strikes solely based on where the ball crosses the midpoint of the plate, 8.5 inches from the front and the back. The top of the strike zone was increased to 53.5% of batter height this year from 51%, and the bottom remained at 27%.

"We do have technical issues surrounding the definition of the strike zone that still need to be worked out," Manfred said.

After splitting having the robot alone for the first three games of each series and a human with a challenge system in the final three during the first 2 1/2 months of the Triple-A season, MLB on June 25 switched to an all-challenge system in which a human umpire makes nearly all decisions.

Each team currently has three challenges in the Pacific Coast League and two in the International League. A team retains its challenge if successful, similar to the regulations for big league teams with video reviews.

"The challenge system is more likely or more supported, if you will, than the straight ABS system," players' association head Tony Clark said earlier Tuesday at a separate session with the BBWAA. "There are those that have no interest in it at all. There are those that have concerns even with the challenge system as to how the strike zone itself is going to be considered, what that looks like, how consistent it is going to be, what happens in a world where Wi-Fi goes down in the ballpark or the tech acts up on any given night.

"We're seeing those issues, albeit in minor league ballparks," Clark added. "We do not want to end up in a world where in a major league ballpark we end up with more questions than answers as to the integrity of that night's game or the calls associated with it."

Playing rules changes go before an 11-member competition committee that includes four players, an umpire and six team representatives. Ahead of the 2023 season, the committee adopted a pitch clock and restrictions on defensive shifts without support from players.

Flagg takes advantage of opportunity to play vs. US Olympic team

LAS VEGAS (AP)—A 3-pointer over Anthony Davis, swish. A baseline turnaround over Jrue Holiday, easy. An acrobatic putback after crashing the boards and getting fouled by Bam Adebayo, no problem.

Those are three of the best defenders in the NBA.

Cooper Flagg is 17 years old. He held his own against them all.

The story of practice for the U.S. Olympic basketball team on Monday was Flagg, who hasn't even played his first college game yet. The Duke freshman — part of the select team that was invited to work out against the Olympic squad during their training camp and widely believed to be in the mix as the No. 1 pick in next year's draft—looked totally at ease going against some of the NBA's biggest names.

"The opportunity, it was great," Flagg said. "It was a blessing to be here. I think just the physicality, and just the level of where I want to get to, there's a lot to get better at, a lot where I need to keep improving. This showed just how big the details are."

He will surely get better. That might be a scary concept.

"He kicked butt here," U.S. select team coach Jamahl Mosley of the Orlando Magic said. "There's a respect factor for what he's done. People who have not seen him play, as he gets himself going within the game, they quickly see what he can do."

The select team is typically made up of young NBA players, brought in to scrimmage the national team and help them prepare for either World Cup or Olympic competition. Flagg was the first college player asked to be part of the select team since Doug McDermott and Marcus Smart were asked to join a mini-camp in 2013.

But those situations weren't anywhere near the same as Flagg being part of this camp. McDermott had played 110 college games for Creighton at that point and was a two-time consensus All-American. Smart was coming off a freshman season when he won Big 12 rookie of the year and player of the year honors at Oklahoma State. They were already proven.

Flagg has zero college points. He still proved plenty in this camp.

"He wants it," U.S. guard Devin Booker said. "I know this experience, he's going to take with him and move forward."

In Monday's scrimmage—the Olympic team beat the select team 74-73—Flagg was in the middle of everything down the stretch and looked perfectly comfortable. And when it was over, there were plenty of pictures with everyone; the select team's final day in camp was Monday. The Olympic team has a few extra players to help with practices for at least the next few days, but most of the select team invitees' time in camp ended with the Monday scrimmage.

"To be able to do what he did, not even playing a college game, let alone an NBA game, there's no fear," select team forward Jaime Jaquez Jr. of the Miami Heat said. "It's relentless. And the thing that you can tell about him is that he just has a knack and the will to win. He doesn't need the ball. He just finds a way to it. And the ball finds its way to him. That's something that you can't teach. He's just got a great feel for the game."

Flagg is a 6-foot-9 forward from Newport, Maine, but played his last two years of high school basketball at Montverde Academy in Florida. He chose Duke over Connecticut, was USA Basketball's male athlete of the year in 2022 after leading the Americans to gold at the U17 World Cup, and was the Gatorade National Player of the Year, Naismith Player of the Year and a McDonald's All-American in his final high school season.

"I was shocked, I was surprised, and I was really excited for this opportunity," Flagg said. "And I'm just really blessed that I was able to come out and capitalize on it and show what I have. I was really grateful to come out and learn. That was the biggest thing for me, just being able to learn and grow, to share a gym with all of these great, great names. Legends. So, I'm just truly blessed."

AP

East forward Cooper Flagg dunks on a fast break during the third quarter of the McDonald's All American boys' basketball game Tuesday, April 2, 2024, in Houston.

NBA moves a big step closer to finalizing new 11-year media rights deals

LAS VEGAS (AP)—The NBA's Board of Governors approved the league's next media rights deals with Disney, NBC and Amazon Prime Video at its meeting Tuesday, moving the league one giant step closer to finalizing the 11-year agreements that will be worth about $76 billion.

Now comes the next, and possibly final, step: seeing if Warner Bros. Discovery will match one of the deals in an effort to extend a relationship with the NBA that dates to the late 1980s. WBD has five days to match, that clock starting to run when it receives the contracts from the league.

NBA Commissioner Adam Silver, citing the ongoing process, declined to offer specifics on when that five-day window starts or whether it has already started.

"Without getting into the specifics of the deal, I'd say philosophically we set out with certain goals in these negotiations and part of them were economic and part of them also led to what are the best ways we can serve our fans going forward," Silver said. "Part of it was to get additional broadcast exposure, and hopefully we will have accomplished that. And also, to get more streaming connectivity with our fans, because in terms of traditional television — while still vital — there is a large portion of our fan base that no longer subscribes to those services."

The new deals, which as currently constructed would keep the NBA on ESPN and ABC plus add NBC and Amazon to the mix, will begin in the 2025-26 season. This coming season marks the end of a nine-year, $24 billion deal that was record-setting for the NBA—and the new deal will shatter those records, both in terms of length and value.

"We wanted to make sure that going forward that our games will be accessible for our fans through various streaming services," Silver said. "So, that's something that we've been very focused on in these deals, and not just on reach in the United States, but reach globally as well."

Much of the basic framework of the new deals, if they become reality, have already emerged. ESPN and ABC will keep the league's top package, including the NBA Finals—which have been on ABC since 2003—and one of the conference finals series, plus a slew of regular season contests.

NBC, which would return as a broadcast partner for the first time since 2002, would showcase games on Sunday night once the NFL season has ended, plus air games on Tuesdays throughout the regular season and stream a Monday night package on Peacock. Prime Video would have games on Thursday night after it is done carrying NFL games. Its other nights would be Friday and Saturday.

NBC and Prime Video would alternate who carries the other conference final.

NBA Cup Tiebreakers

A mild tweak has been made to the group play tiebreaker system for the in-season tournament, now called the Emirates NBA Cup.

Overtime scoring has been removed from the point differential and total points tiebreakers. Those are the second and third tiebreakers, after head-to-head record, in group play.

It doesn't totally remove the differential, and that tiebreaker led to some weirdness last season. Boston was intentionally fouling Chicago up by 32 points with 7 minutes left in a group play game last season to try and ensure it would win any tiebreakers. And New York advanced to the quarterfinals on point differential over Cleveland, Orlando and Brooklyn.

"I understand the concept," Knicks guard Josh Hart said last season of the point differential tiebreaker. "But it's weird."

Flopping Rule

The in-game flopping penalty is now permanent, after a one-year trial this past season convinced the league to go forward.

When flopping is called in-game now, the offending player is charged with a non-unsportsmanlike technical foul and the opposing team is awarded one free throw — to be attempted by any player who is in the game when the technical is assessed.

A player cannot be ejected from a game based on flopping violations.

Expansion

As Silver has said many times, once the league's collective bargaining agreement and media deals get done, the next major project for the NBA will be looking at whether it's time for expansion.

"I think we will engage this fall, in earnest, in the process of making those determinations—should we expand and if we were to expand, how many teams should we expand," Silver said.

2nd Annual Rota Marathon on Jan. 18

Building on the success of its inaugural race highlighting one of the most picturesque islands of the archipelago, the Marianas Visitors Authority will hold the 2nd Annual Rota Marathon in the Marianas, on Jan. 18, 2025, featuring a full marathon, half-marathon, and 5K courses.

Eighty-three registrants from as far away as Japan joined last January's race on Martin Luther King Jr. Day weekend. The MVA will open online registration next month with early bird rates for those seeking a memorable race in the captivating and quaint island of Rota.

"Rota is renowned in the Marianas for its stunning nature and friendly community, and all that adds up to a great weekend experience for visitors in Rota Marathon," said MVA m,anaging director Christopher A. Concepcion. "We've starting planning this year to give everyone plenty of time to join us for this lovely race. If you're looking for an escape and a bit of mindfulness, the roadways of Rota Marathon are the place for you!"

Cash prizes will be awarded for top finishers in all races. Mandatory race packet pick-up will be on Jan. 17, 2024, in the late afternoon. Further details will be announced when registration opens at www.mymarianas.com.

Rota is 30 minutes from the capitol island of Saipan via light aircraft.

For more information, contact MVA Community Projects manager Martin Duenas at communityprojects@mymarianas.com or (670) 664-3200 or MVA Rota Field Operations supervisor Dave Atalig at datalig@mymarianas.com or (670) 532-0327, or visit www.mymarianas.com. ***(PR)***

NMI

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with the defender at her side. The keeper lunged forward to defend but Casarino kicked to her right and found an opening for their first goal and win of the tourney.

In their first match, the NMIFA Women's Team lost to Chelsea FC, 0-2.

The first match of the tourney was between Shonan Bellmare and Tuloy, with Bellmare taking the win, 2-0. Then in the match between Chelsea FC and Shonan Bellmare, Chelsea FC won, 1-0.

After all six round-robin matches, an awards banquet was held at the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan. The champion will be crowned based on the highest accumulated points earned during the rounds.

If two or more teams are equal based on the above criteria, their rankings shall be determined as follows: Higher goal difference between the teams concerned; higher number of goals scored between the teams concerned; and least number of goals against between the teams concerned.

Results of the awards banquet will be posted in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune*.

Before the tourney began, Tan made his remarks about the LPK Cup and his late mom. "She's been to Saipan many, many times. She truly enjoyed this island. So, in her memory, we have a friendly tournament this afternoon and welcome the three visiting teams."

For Macapagal-Arroyo, she said, "What a wonderful gesture to make this cup in memory of your mother and please accept our condolences. I'm very happy once again to be on Saipan. It's my second time—this time to watch football. Soccer was not a big game on Saipan a long time ago before you put up your football association—maybe only 100 people played it. But now, with your support, the Northern Marianas Football Association has been able to give a lot of exposure to soccer for the youth here and around the region."

Macapagal-Arroyo is the honorary chairwoman of the Tuloy Football Club, and last visited Saipan 30 years ago. "Let me say, it's a wonderful exposure for Tuloy to be here playing with the other teams from the Northern Marianas, from Japan, and Hong Kong. What a wonderful exposure and vice versa. So, a wonderful game and good luck to all of you," she said.

LEIGH GASES

Former Philippine president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Northern Mariana Islands Football Association president Jerry Tan seen together after the opening ceremony of the LPK Cup 2024, a friendly football tournament between four football clubs from the NMI, Japan, Philippines, and Hong Kong at NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville yesterday.

SENATE

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and Sen. Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian). It was introduced by the Senate of the 23rd Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature.

"To congratulate all athletes and officials who participated in the 2024 Micronesian Games for their outstanding performance and proudly representing the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands," the resolution states.

"Whereas, the Micronesian Games is a quadrennial multi-sport event bringing together athletes throughout the region to showcase their athleticism and skill among all island entities of Micronesia; and whereas, over the years, the Micronesian Games have laid a strong foundation for sportsmanship and uniting our sons and daughters of Micronesia across the vast Pacific building lifelong affiliations in the love for sports; and whereas, the 2024 Micronesian Games held in Majuro of the Republic of the Marshall Islands from June 15-24, 2024 gave rise to the growing athleticism of our islands; and whereas, the CNMI delegation sent a combined total of 110 athletes and officials to represent the Commonwealth to the best of their athletic abilities such as basketball, beach volleyball, fast-pitch softball, swimming, tennis, weightlifting, and wrestling; and whereas, the CNMI Delegation garnered first in the overall medal count, breaking records for the most medals awarded and setting a new record for the most gold medals awarded," said the resolution.

The NMI National Swim Team composed of 17 delegates collected the biggest bounty of 49 gold medals, 15 silver medals, and 14 bronze medals; the NMI National Athletics Team made up of 21 delegates hauled in 5 gold medals, 2 silver medals, and 6 bronze medals; the NMI National Basketball Team that consisted of 28 delegates won 1 silver medal; the NMI National Beach Volleyball Team made up of 4 delegates garnered 2 bronze medals; the NMI National Women's Fast-Pitch Softball Team composed of 19 delegates bagged 1 bronze medal; the NMI National Tennis Team of 9 delegates took home 7 gold medals and 2 bronze medals; the NMI National Weightlifting Team composed of 8 delegates claimed 3 gold medals, 5 silver medals, and 4 bronze medals: and the NMI National Wrestling Team composed of 4 delegates garnered 6 gold medals.

The ceremony was attended by Team NMI athletes and officials of the eight sports federations, the sponsors, Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang, Northern Marianas Sport Association board president Jerry Tan and board members, Senate President Edith DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan), Sen. Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian), Saipan Mayor Ramon B. "RB" Camacho, and family, friends, and supporters.

Congratulatory speeches were made by Tan, Apatang, Camacho, and closing remarks were made by NMSA treasurer John Hirsh.

In Tan's remarks, he said, "We are here to celebrate the 122 medals—70 gold, 23 silver, and 29 bronze. We broke a lot of records. Like I said, this Team Marianas did not just train for a few weeks or a few months. They've been putting in a lot of hard work day in and day out for a year—two years—looking forward to the next Micronesian Games."

"The result that they've accomplished was not by luck—it's hard work. So that's why I really want to appreciate the eight national sports federations that participated," he said. "In all eight sports, we medaled."

He added that in a span of 25 months, the NMI delegation has participated and won medals in all three big sporting events in the region—the 2022 Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games, the 2023 Pacific Games in the Solomon Islands, and the 2024 Micronesian Games in the Republic of Marshall Islands.

With that, he said, "we want to give maximum opportunities to all the athletes and that is what we will continue to do." He added that with the upcoming 2025 Pacific Mini Games in Palau, they want to start preparing and planning to send another strong delegation there.

For Apatang, he said, "Welcome back and well done, Team Marianas! Governor [Arnold I.] Palacios and I would like to give a huge shout-out to our fantastic team for bringing home a total of 122 medals in the 2024 Micronesian Games. The CNMI is proud of your accomplishments and thank you for being the true sportsmen and sportswomen, and for professionally representing our beautiful CNMI in the Micronesian Games."

Team NMI's participation in the 2024 Micronesian Games was supported by the following sponsors: Joeten Daidai Foundation, Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation, Skechers, Marianas Express Lines Ltd. as platinum sponsors. Triple J Enterprise, E-Land, TakeCare Insurance, and D&Q International Distributors were gold sponsors. RNV Construction, Bank of Guam, IT&E, Dial-Rent-to-Own, Chinese Association of Saipan, Black Construction Corporation, GPPC, and Matson were silver sponsors. And P&A Corporation, Laolao Bay Golf & Resort, McDonald's Jose and Ruri Foundation, Y.K. Corp., Zoom Cafe, Artman Corp., and I Love Saipan were bronze sponsors.

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Jarren Duran's 2-run HR gives AL a 5-3 win over NL.

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NMI, PH, Japan, HK featured in LPK Cup

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The LPK Cup 2024, a friendly soccer tournament yesterday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville, featured matches from four soccer clubs in the NMI, the Philippines, Japan, and Hong Kong.

The teams were the Northern Marianas Football Association Women's Team, Tuloy FC Women's Team from the Philippines, Shonan Bellmare FC U15 Girls Team from Japan, and Chelsea Soccer School HK Women's Team from Hong Kong.

The cup was in memory of NMIFA president Jerry Tan's mother, Lam Pak Kim, who passed away at the age of 95 three weeks ago in Hong Kong.

The cup was attended by former Philippine president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, dignitaries, NMIFA clubs and members, family and friends of the players, and football fans.

As of press time, not all matches are finished.

The NMIFA Women's Team won one of two matches in Rounds 1 and 2.

They defeated Tuloy FC, 1-0, in Round 2 after a late-game goal by Jannah Casarino in the 23rd minute. She was assisted by Khristelle Itaas who kicked the ball to her halfway across the pitch, then Casarino pushed forward

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LEIGH GASES

NMIFA Women's Team's Beatrice Gross, right, sprints after a loose ball during their game against Tuloy FC Women's Team from the Philippines, in the LPK Cup 2024 friendly tournament yesterday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

LEIGH GASES

Former Philippine president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo makes her remarks as the guest of honor in the LPK Cup 2024, a friendly football tournament between four football clubs from the NMI, Japan, Philippines, and Hong Kong at NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville yesterday.

Senate resolution presented to Team NMI

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Team NMI athletes of the 10th Micronesian Games were not only awarded cash incentives, but were also honored with a Senate resolution during an appreciation ceremony for their record-breaking performance at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium last Tuesday.

The team won 122 medals—70 gold, 23 silver, and 29 bronze. They now hold the Micronesian Games record of the most gold medals, along with the most total medals ever won by an NMI delegation since the 92 (44-23-25) previously recorded in the 2010 Micronesian Games held in Palau.

Senate Resolution No. 23-06 was presented to the team by Senate President Edith DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan)

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LEIGH GASES

Some athletes of Team NMI from the 10th Micronesian Games pose with the Senate Resolution No. 23-06 plaque that was presented to the team by Senate President Edith DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan), center next to plaque, and Sen. Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian), center, behind plaque. They are joined by Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang, fifth left, Saipan Mayor Ramon B. "RB" Camacho, far left, and Northern Marianas Sports Association president Jerry Tan, fourth left, and its members during the team's appreciation ceremony at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium last Tuesday.

LEIGH GASES

File photo shows Aimeliik Bat Boys posing with their championship trophy and medals, along with Belau Amateur Softball Association president Leo Bobai, far left, during the awards ceremony of the 2023 Budweiser BASA Slow Pitch Open League championship at the Dan Dan Softball Field last October.

2024 BASA Open League starts this Sunday

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The 2024 Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball Association Men's Slow Pitch Open League starts this Sunday, July 21, at the Dandan Softball Field.

For now, games are set for every Sunday and will run until either late November or early December and will feature 16 teams.

The 16 teams are Aimeliik Bat Boys, Team Yayaya, AB Team, Just4Fun, The Kliq, Team Luchan, Blue Jays, Brotherhood, Team Bat That Ass Up, Saipal, Red Torch, Homies, Pare Pack, Taotaomona, Ur Balls, and Team Whazzup.

Last season's defending champions were the Aimeliik Bat Boys after beating Just-4Fun in the last two games after losing the first of a best-of-3 thriller last October.

For more information, contact BASA president Leo Bobao at (670) 285-3426 or vice president McQueen Masaharu at (670) 483-3554.